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A HISTORY OF BIOWEAPONS

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RECORD-BREAKING GLOBETROTTER

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AMERICA'S GREATEST TRAVEL WRITER

ADVENTURE CALLS
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THE SUMMER ISSUE

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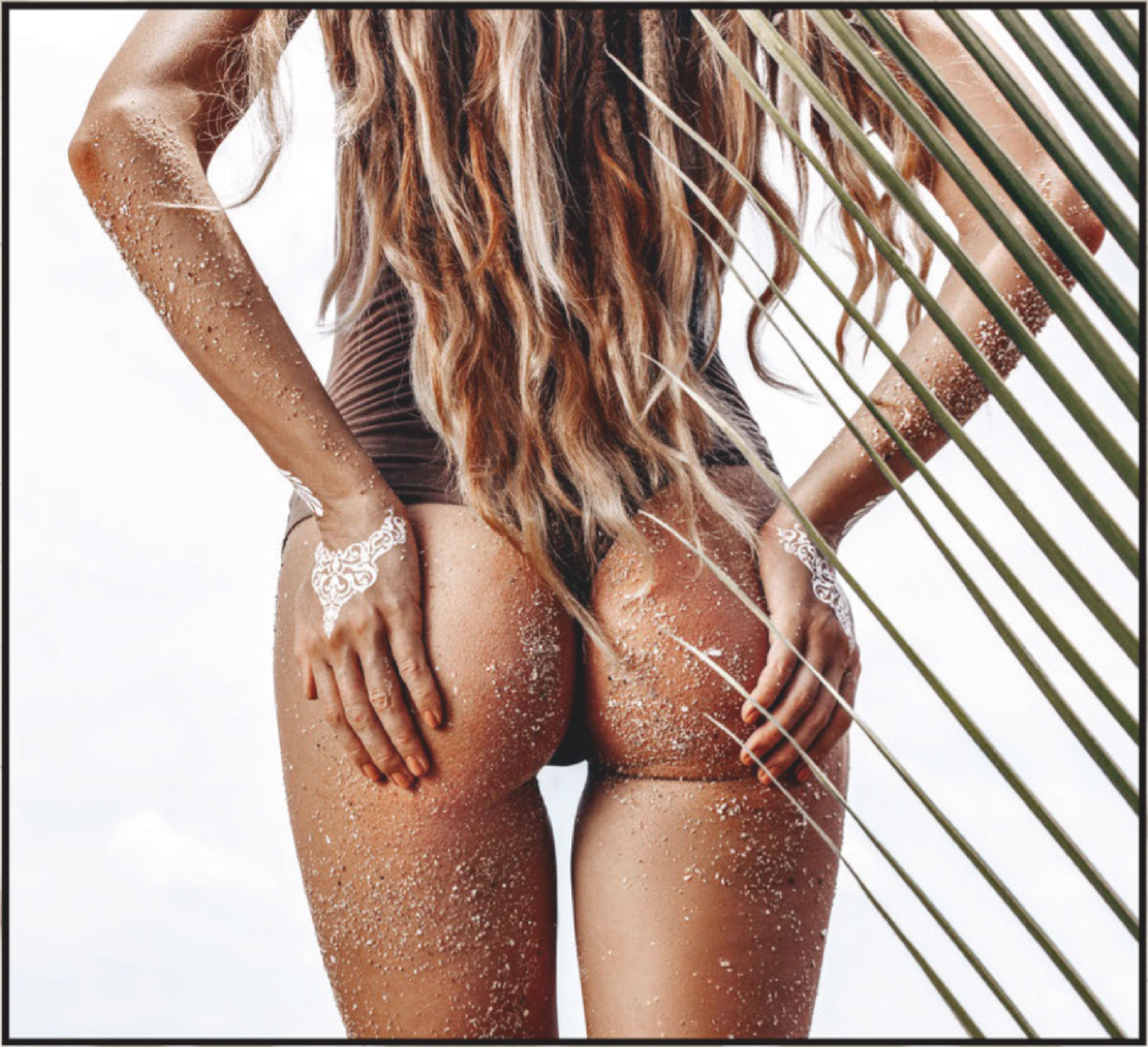

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FROM THE EDITORS

AS WE WRITE THIS, the coronavirus has infected over six million people worldwide and killed over 400,000. U.S. job losses since the pandemic began have topped 40 million. People around the planet are wearing face masks. The virus is raging out of control in Brazil, other parts of South America, and in Russia. Africa's becoming a big worry.

In short, it's a shitshow.

Happily, our Summer issue lets you enjoy exciting adventures without ever leaving the comfort and safety of these pages. We talk to Paul Theroux, America's greatest travel writer and author of 50-plus books (his latest, *On the Plain of Snakes: A Mexican Journey,* received raves), and Cassie De Pecol, who smashed the Guinness World Record for traveling to every country in the world in the fastest time. Cassie combines incredible energy, daring and entrepreneurial vision, beauty, and fitness into one amazing woman.

And once things calm down on the Covid-19 front, you'll be ready to impress locals and stay out of trouble in foreign lands thanks to journalist and former VICE host Thomas Morton, who teaches us the go-to curses of places like France, Russia, Italy, China, Mexico, the Middle East, and, yes, that exotic realm above the 49th Parallel, the Quebec province.

And in case you think we're dodging the biggest issue of the day by far, Elton Cornell's gripping feature looks at the coronavirus from a bioweapons perspective, offering a scary history of weaponized pathogens.

On a cheerier note, we've got stuff about great American hiking trails and awesome boot camps and academies where you can master wilderness survival. Plus, we share a bunch of hot travel tips for use when this nightmare is over, and clue you in to top-of-the-line survival gear.

Last but far from least, we're thrilled to introduce four new beauties to the Penthouse family, our May, June, July, and August Pets, respectively: Emma Hix, Jazmin Luv, Nicole Vaunt, and Quinn Wilde.

Stay clean, friends!

–The Penthouse Editors
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FIX'D

BE A EUNUCH, LIVE LONGER

WHEN AMERICAN GENDER DISPARITIES are discussed, we often hear about the wage gap but never about the gaps in personal wealth or spending. The latter two favor women, who control more than half of America's private personal wealth and actually spend far more money than men do.

Then there's the longevity gap. It's persisted for decades and is mirrored all over the world. At the moment, the average American man will live to be 76—five fewer years than the average woman. Black women outlive white men, and Hispanic women outlive both groups.

What's to blame for this gap? Experts say one of the leading causes may be testosterone.

A 2002 study of Korean eunuchs revealed they lived 14 to 19 years longer than men who had their balls intact.

Testosterone not only causes decreased immune function and cardiac disease, it also leads to behavioral risk-taking. Men are more likely than women to drink and fight and drive recklessly. They're 24 times more likely to commit murder.

Then again, men suffer 92 percent of all workplace deaths. And although women threaten to kill themselves a lot more than men do, guys account for about two-thirds of suicides. And since we've already mentioned murder, four out of every five murder victims are men.

Since society expects them to "man up" and be tough, men are also less likely than women to get regular medical checkups. The fact that they're expected to bottle up their emotions probably takes a toll on their health as well.

How much can this disparity be attributed to romantic misery and unhappy marriages? It is probably scientifically impossible to determine exactly how much being henpecked and belittled and mocked by their female partners contributes to male mortality, but as the old joke goes…

"Why do men die much earlier than women? Because they want to."

PHOTOS: ANDREJS ZAVADSKIS; PUHHHA; GUNNAR PIPPEL / SHUTTERSTOCK

GOING FULL CARNIVORE

ALYSE PARKER, an Instagrammer and YouTuber, gained nearly a million combined followers by espousing veganism, only to alienate them all by suddenly switching to the Carnivore Diet.

Based on the idea that our distant ancestors in the pre-agricultural era subsisted solely on animal products, the Carnivore Diet means you only eat meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products that are low in lactose, such as butter and hard cheeses.

After the abrupt switch, Parker said she felt "more mentally clear, focused, wholesome, and healthy" than she'd felt in years. Other supporters claim it aids in improving mood and testosterone levels while reducing inflammation, arthritis, obesity, and diabetes.

Despite the fact the diet contains zero fiber, they also say it aids in digestion. Some even argue that fiber causes constipation and bloating, instead of curing it.

American orthopedist Shawn Baker is perhaps the most well-known proponent of the Carnivore Diet. Although in his fifties, he recently set two world rowing records and claims he can deadlift over 700 pounds.

Baker made the Carnivore Diet famous by appearing on Joe Rogan's podcast. Rogan tried the diet last January, claiming he felt amazing and lost 12 pounds, despite the discomfort of explosive diarrhea.

However, critics say the diet is cuckoo and point out that no ancient cultures beyond those in arctic zones—where the environment was too cold to support edible plant life—practiced it.

They also note there are no clinical trials to support claims that it's beneficial. Further, they reference the fact that New Mexico revoked Baker's medical license in 2017 due to competency concerns. Plus, the diet is globally unsustainable. If everyone on Earth got so meat-centric, the planet would burst into flames due to global warming.

Apparently some people just want to watch the world burn.

THE FISHY SCIENCE BEHIND BIG BALLS

BASED ON FACTORS like stress, inactivity, pollution, and junk food, sperm counts have been falling across the globe. If this doesn't bother you, we pray your sperm count falls so low your cock shoots out a small puff of dust every time you come.

As for testicular size over time, there's not much data since there wasn't a lot of ball-measuring going on a century ago.

Seemingly oblivious or unconcerned with how weird the project sounds, Danish researchers examined nearly 1,700 young men, controlled for whether or not they'd taken fish-oil supplements, and carefully measured their testicle size and semen quality after begging the young'uns to provide a sperm sample via self-pleasuring "in a room close to the semen laboratory."

"In this large cross-sectional study," write the researchers, "we found positive associations of self-reported use of fish-oil supplements with testicular function as measured by higher semen volume, total sperm count, and testes size…and a higher free testosterone to LH ratio."

Men who had taken fish oil for over 60 days showed increases of around 25 percent in sperm count, 15 percent in free testosterone, and, lawd a'mighty, testes 10 percent more swollen than those of men who took no supplements.

Other foods—such as fruits, vegetables, poultry, and seafood—have been associated with increased sperm quality, but if you really want bigger loads (as well as bigger balls!), we recommend you start popping fish-oil capsules pronto.

DENUNCIATION OF THE REAGAN REGIME
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THE FEMALE ORGASM RABBIT HOLE

LIKE THE MALE NIPPLE, the female orgasm appears to serve no evolutionary function beyond selfish, filthy pleasure. It is not necessary for conception, a fact which has been noted by sexual icons like Aristotle and Hippocrates.

Some theorize the female orgasm exists merely to tempt women into having more sex, which would serve the evolutionary function of encouraging procreation (though lackluster lovers everywhere would beg to differ).

Others espouse the “upsuck theory,” which says that an orgasm’s muscular contractions help to propel sperm up into the fallopian tube.

Whatever the reason, there has to be one.

This “neuro-endocrine reflex is too complex to be an evolutionary accident,” argue researchers at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine.

Whereas female humans release an egg every month whether or not they’re having sex, female rabbits only ovulate during sex. They apparently don’t have orgasms, either, and one hesitates to dig any further to find out exactly how researchers came to that conclusion.

Noting that antidepressants inhibit orgasm among both genders, the Cincinnati researchers decided to dose female rabbits with SSRIs to determine whether they also inhibited ovulation ability. If they did, it might suggest the female orgasm is an evolutionary remnant of the fact that sexual intercourse triggered ovulation among lower mammals.

After injecting female rabbits with fluoxetine—the generic form of Prozac—they had the drugged-up lady bunnies mate with a very lucky male rabbit named Frank. They found the antidepressant lowered the incidence of ovulation during sex by a third.

However, a Belgian endocrinologist who spends most of her time studying the female orgasmic response among ferrets claims that these results are “marginal” and inconclusive.

The most depressing takeaway is realizing that while most of us toil away our waking hours trying to earn an honest buck, somewhere people are being paid handsomely to watch rabbits and ferrets fuck.

MOVE TO CHATTANOOGA BEFORE WORD GETS OUT

IT’S SAFE TO PRESUME most people never even think of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

If they’re even aware of its existence, it’s only because of forgotten songs about choo-choo trains and shoeshine boys.

This is a good thing, because if word ever got out that it’s one of the country’s few remaining hidden gems, people would flock there and destroy everything that’s great about it.

Perched about 110 miles north of the hellish sprawl of the Atlanta metro area and tucked amid the serene Appalachian mountains, Chattanooga has earned its official nickname of “Scenic City.” It’s an eye-catching amalgam of rivers and bridges, with nearby mountains and waterfalls.

You can take the Incline Railway–the steepest passenger railroad track in the world–up the side of Lookout Mountain for breathtaking views of the Chattanooga Valley. From the summit–only six miles from downtown Chattanooga–you can see seven states at once.

At Ruby Falls Cave, you can travel 1,100 feet underground and witness a waterfall almost as high as Niagara Falls.

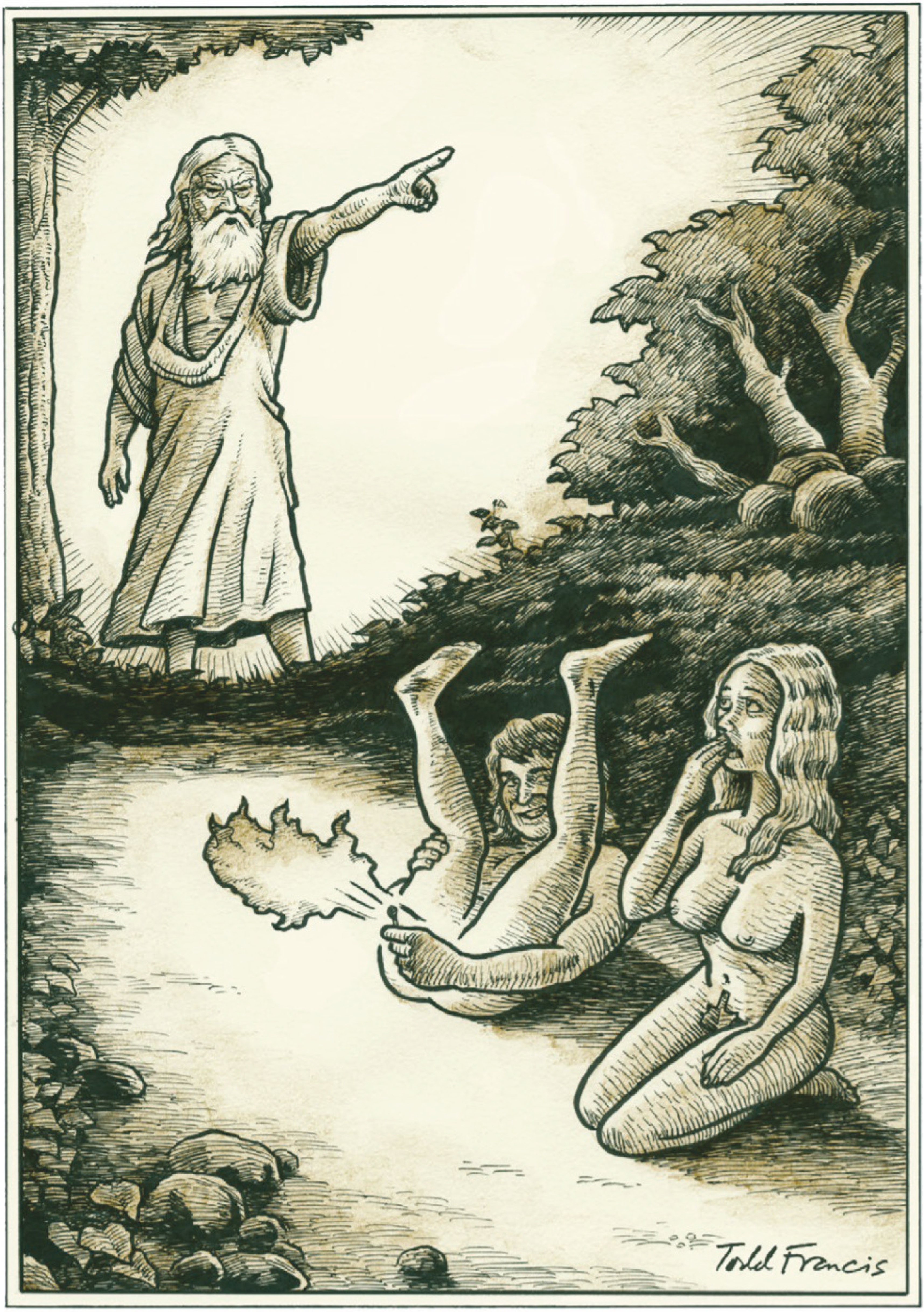
Don’t tell anyone the City Cafe Diner, open 24 hours, is the world’s greatest, featuring 35 different cakes which all seem a foot high.

Across the Tennessee River, in a hipster part of town, the restaurant Aretha Frankensteins serves pancakes the size of Frisbees.

And lest you think it’s merely a primitive burg of backwards, moonshine-brewing hillbillies, the city is becoming a tech hub boasting some of North America’s fastest internet speeds.

Chattanooga offers the rare opportunity to enjoy nature whenever you want and get back downtown in the blink of an eye. Visit before it’s too late.

PHOTOS: ANDREY L; KENNETH SPONSLER / SHUTTERSTOCK



God looked upon Adam and Eve horsing around, and heard a ruckus, and banished them from the garden. Genesis 3:23

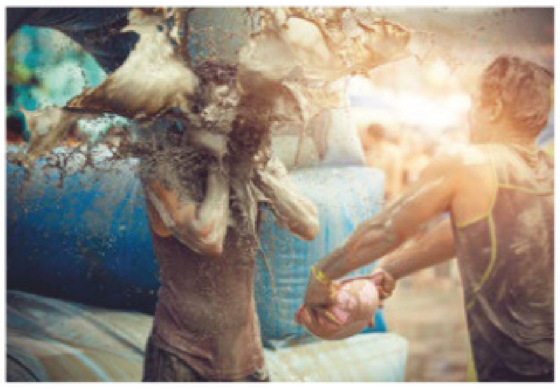
WORLD'S MESSIEST FESTIVALS

ACROSS THE PLANET, people attend cultural festivals for a sense of community, tradition, and to mark the passing of seasons—NOT to be doused in mud, water, or wine, and DEFINITELY not to be pelted with tomatoes.

Others, though, like to get messy. They treat the event as a sort of baptism where getting soaked (or worse) is the point. Here are four festivals where no one is content until they walk away drenched.

SONGKRAN FESTIVAL, THAILAND

The world's largest open-air super-soaker contest takes place every spring for three days in the northern Thai city of Chiang Mai. It is ostensibly intended as a New Year's festival that symbolizes "purification," but it's really just an excuse to close off major streets and use them as combat zones to lob water balloons at strangers, blast them with water pistols, or, hell, just toss an entire bucket of ice water over someone's head with absolute impunity. There's also the crowning of a "Miss Songkran," but don't let her traditional garb fool you—at this highly hydrated hootenanny, it's likely she's nothing more than the winner of a "traditional" wet T-shirt contest.



BORYEONG MUD FESTIVAL, SOUTH KOREA

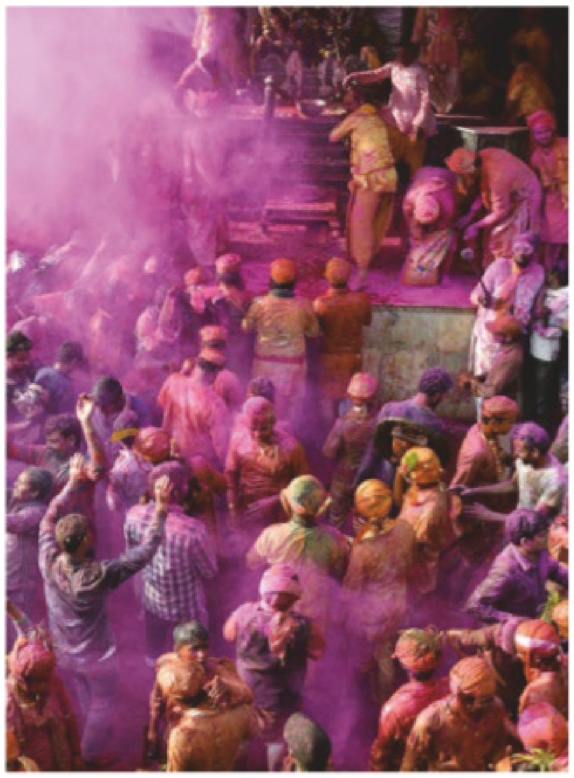
This year's mud-slingin' fest—described in halting English on one website as "the exciting mud experience with the people around the world"—will stretch from July 19 to July 28 at South Korea's Daecheon Beach. Massive quantities of the sloppy stuff are scooped from the Boryeong tidal flats and used to create a "Mud Experience Land" of mud pools, slides, a "ski slope," and even a pungent mud prison. For ten straight days, people flop around in mud as if it was Woodstock—without the brown acid to bum everyone's high.

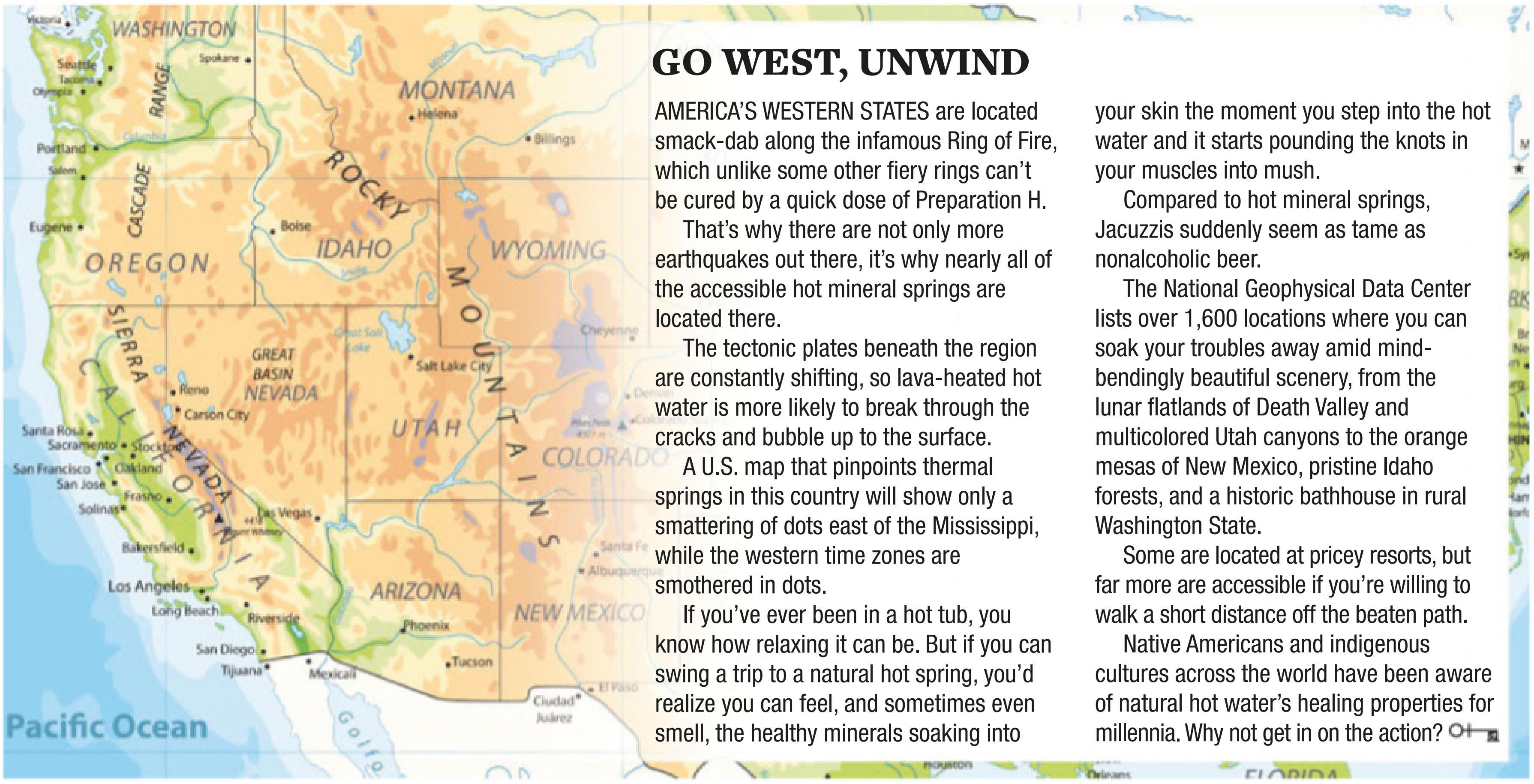
LA TOMATINA, SPAIN

What is essentially the world's largest food fight unfolds in late summer in the Spanish village of Buñol. It apparently originated in 1945 with a sudden food fight between locals that spiraled out of control, and a tradition was born. La Tomatina begins when volunteers riding in the backs of tomato-filled trucks unload the tomatoes on villagers, who in turn toss them at other villagers to the point where the entire town is one squishy, pulpy, drunken mess.

HARO WINE FESTIVAL, SPAIN

Occurring every summer in the village of Haro in northern Spain, the dramatic and pitched Batalla del Vino (Battle of Wine) begins with the mayor, riding on horseback, leading wine-carrying villagers to the Cliffs of Bilibio in the early morning. After Mass is recited, drinking celebrants drench one another in local red wine until the whole crowd is purple. What's great is that everyone's a winner—as long as there's enough post-skirmish hooch left to keep the celebration going. If they dumped all the wine, one could imagine things getting a little ugly.

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GO WEST, UNWIND

AMERICA'S WESTERN STATES are located smack-dab along the infamous Ring of Fire, which unlike some other fiery rings can't be cured by a quick dose of Preparation H.

That's why there are not only more earthquakes out there, it's why nearly all of the accessible hot mineral springs are located there.

The tectonic plates beneath the region are constantly shifting, so lava-heated hot water is more likely to break through the cracks and bubble up to the surface.

A U.S. map that pinpoints thermal springs in this country will show only a smattering of dots east of the Mississippi, while the western time zones are smothered in dots.

If you've ever been in a hot tub, you know how relaxing it can be. But if you can swing a trip to a natural hot spring, you'd realize you can feel, and sometimes even smell, the healthy minerals soaking into your skin the moment you step into the hot water and it starts pounding the knots in your muscles into mush.

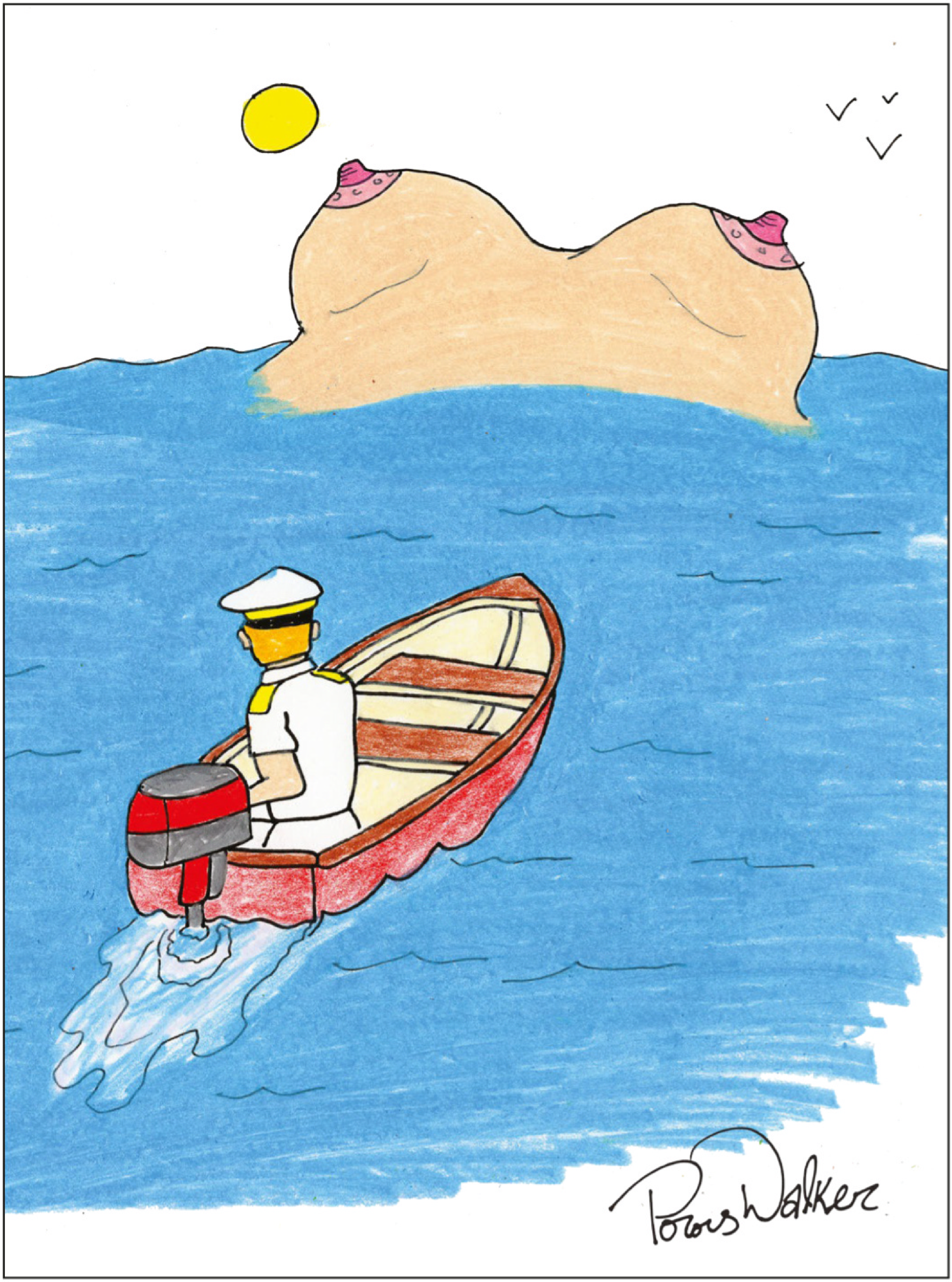
Compared to hot mineral springs, Jacuzzis suddenly seem as tame as nonalcoholic beer.

The National Geophysical Data Center lists over 1,600 locations where you can soak your troubles away amid mind-bendingly beautiful scenery, from the lunar flatlands of Death Valley and multicolored Utah canyons to the orange mesas of New Mexico, pristine Idaho forests, and a historic bathhouse in rural Washington State.

Some are located at pricey resorts, but far more are accessible if you're willing to walk a short distance off the beaten path.

Native Americans and indigenous cultures across the world have been aware of natural hot water's healing properties for millennia. Why not get in on the action?

PHOTOS: WARAPHORN APHAI; CARTARIUM; CARTARIUM; LAKISHA BEECHAM; CARTARIUM / SHUTTERSTOCK


Porous Walker

GAMING

HELL ON EARTH

DOOM ETERNAL

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS (PS4, XBOX ONE, NINTENDO SWITCH, PC)

THE demon-infested hellscapes of the *Doom* series have become sacred land for gamers ever since the 1993 original lobbed first-person shooters into the mainstream.

This latest installment—direct sequel to a 2016 reboot—doesn't stray far from the lightning-paced, giblet-splattered formula established at the game's birth. The action moves a bit faster, your character is more agile, and demon deaths are sufficiently grisly given improvements in the field of gory fidelity. But more than just a sequel, this is a celebration of the *Doom* dynasty.

The demons are in the details. You once again fill the armor of the Doom Slayer, the original space marine, tasked with retaking Earth from an invasion of hellspawn led by a coven of Satanic priests in their Goth-tech fortresses. You'll stage missions from an orbital man cave that you'll stock with the greatest peashooters from the *Doom* arsenal: chain guns, shotguns, rocket launchers, and, of course, the pinnacle of hyperbolic armaments—the BFG 9000. Your Praetor Suit has been enhanced with a shoulder-mounted flamethrower and a retractable sword—great for relieving foes of their arms (and heads and lower bodies). A new meat hook attachment works like a grappling hook to zip across environments for fast cover, or if you just want to reach out and eviscerate someone.

Playing *Doom Eternal* on the aptly named "Nightmare" difficulty will get you the most mileage out of the single-player campaign, after which you'll switch to a new two-on-one multiplayer mode.

It pits an armed-to-the-fangs Doom Slayer against a duo of player-controlled demons. You can choose from five types of demons in six new multiplayer maps.

More interesting is an option to slip into the rotten skin of a demon in a buddy's campaign, prowling around the shadows with the other satanic grunts. It's a novel perspective on the life of a disposable minion. If you manage to disembowel the Doom Slayer, hell will echo with songs of your deed.

BACK FROM THE DEAD: FOUR CLASSICS RESURRECTED ON A SYSTEM NEAR YOU

> 4 <

DOOM 64

(BETHESDA SOFTWORKS, PS4, XBOX ONE, NINTENDO SWITCH, PC)

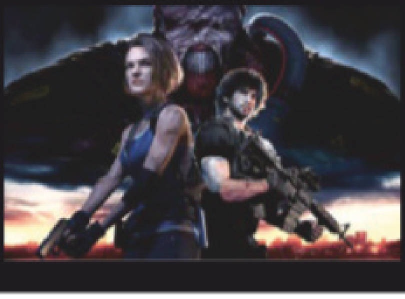
One of the most atmospherically rich entries in the *Doom* franchise hasn't seen the light of day since 1997, when it debuted on the family-friendly Nintendo 64. Now a modern generation of demon slayers can experience the moodiness and eccentric level design of *Doom 64* for free as a pre-order bonus for *Doom Eternal.*

> 3 <

RESIDENT EVIL 3

(CAPCOM, PS4, XBOX ONE, PC)

You don't need to be a keeper of *Resident Evil* canon to appreciate this high-def remake of the franchise's most heart-stopping installment, really just a series of terrifying encounters with the Nemesis, a gargantuan creature intent on ending you. This unstoppable, shambling bioweapon pursues the player through zombie-zoo streets, subway tunnels, castle corridors, and secret labs until the explosive twist ending.



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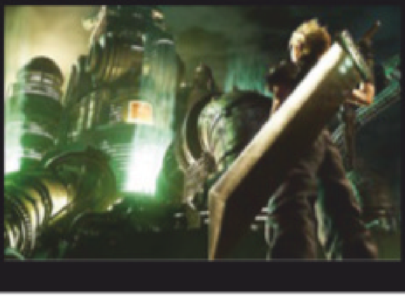
FINAL FANTASY VII

(SQUARE ENIX, PS4)

More than just an adventure game, *Final Fantasy VII* was the cinematic event of 1997 despite appearing only on the small screen. With its deep character development and fantastic pre-rendered environments, *FFVII* brought nerdy role-playing epics into the mainstream. This remake keeps the original's heart intact, but comes with a facelift of modern visuals now generated in real time.



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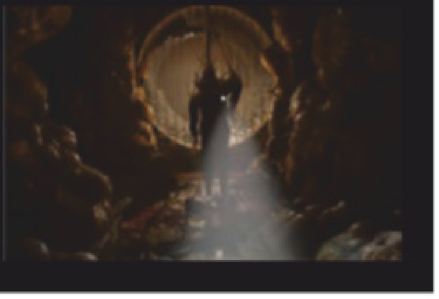
HALF-LIFE: ALYX

(VALVE, PC)

In the seminal sci-fi shooter *Half-Life,* a "resonance cascade" ruined a perfectly good Monday morning for badass egghead Gordon Freeman, transforming the world into an authoritarian dystopia. This VR-exclusive mini-sequel jumps to the perspective of Freeman's ally, Alyx Vance, offering her side of the battle against interdimensional baddies.



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Our readers' exotic sexcapades brought to life...

CRUSH

Epic Traveler

CASSIE DE PECOL TOURED EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD—IN RECORD TIME.

INTERVIEW BY PHIL HANRAHAN

WHEN it comes to dream-chasing, Cassie De Pecol–adventurer, triathlete, entrepreneur, fitness expert, future astronaut, and someone who smashed the Guinness World Record for fastest global travel–isn't big on rainchecks. Her philosophy? Do it now.

A Connecticut native who sprints through airport corridors after long international flights, both to get the blood flowing and so she doesn't have to stand in line at border control, De Pecol captured her dynamic approach in a June 2019 website post.

"I personally don't believe in waiting to fulfill a life goal or mission," she wrote while reflecting on two huge accomplishments she made happen before age 30, as planned.

Her first big goal, achieved when she entered Yemen in February 2017, was to travel to the world's 193 sovereign countries in a shorter timeframe than anyone in history. Spending two to five days in each country, De Pecol trotted the globe in under 560 days, vaporizing the Guinness record by a full year and nine months.

She began training for her next goal–an Ironman Triathlon–the instant she wrapped Expedition 196 (Taiwan, Kosovo, and Palestine added three more lands). And in November 2018, after swimming 2.4 miles, biking 116 miles, and running a marathon, she'd bagged goal No. 2.

She's given a TED Talk. She knows Krav Maga, the Israeli self-defense art. She's working toward her private pilot's license. In 2014, she spent 21 days in the Panamanian jungle alongside three others on an episode of the Discovery Channel's hit survival show *Naked and Afraid,* which sends people into the bush nude, equipped with just one tool.

In 2017, Virgin Galactic picked her to be their first female astronaut.

Before corporate sponsorships and brand ambassador deals arrived later in Expedition 196, De Pecol had funded her journeys with money earned from lifeguarding, babysitting, and hotel cleaning jobs. Earlier, when she'd left college, she was up to her neck in loan debt. But once she harnessed her incredible drive and laser focus, she couldn't be stopped.

Along with loving travel, De Pecol is animated by passions for sustainability (during Expedition 196, she gave talks on eco-travel to more than 16,000 students in 40 countries) and promoting women-owned businesses. These passions fuse in her nonprofit organization Her International, which funds female-driven businesses that encourage sustainable development.

De Pecol even has her own fitness app, World Fitness by Cassie. Available in the App Store, it offers customized plans and 120-plus workouts to keep you fit while traveling.

We spoke to this intrepid traveler about her adventures, fitness secrets, Discovery show, and beloved cat Kishmere, a white Persian who often joins her on the road.

A few years before Expedition 196, you journeyed solo through 25 countries and worked in nine. What are your favorite memories?
Aguas Calientes, Peru, would be one. To get there I took a long drive in a little van through the Andes mountains, along rugged cliff-side roads. Then I followed train tracks on foot. The town, nestled in huge mountains, is near Machu Picchu. I stayed there two months and interned/worked for room and board at hostels. I also started my first business and would walk into Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel and advise staff and management on sustainability initiatives.

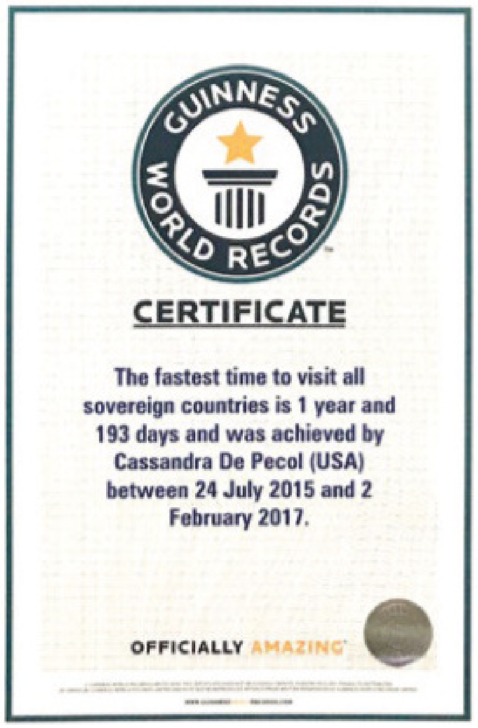
It was invigorating to be so close to one of the world's great wonders, alone, with so much incredible nature to explore.

Above, left to right: Cassie De Pecol in Mongolia, Bhutan, and Palestine

PHOTOS COUTRESY OF CASSIE DE PECOL; CREDIT: KWAKU ALSTON

My favorite hike, a death-defying one, was Putucusi. It was scary climbing up a mountain cliff on hanging, broken ladders, but awe-inspiring at the top.

Another favorite memory? Turkey, in general. It was my introduction to a culture between East and West. I worked for free room and board there, too, and explored as much of the country as I could, alone, with little cash. I made great friends along the way and living/working in Olympos, on the Mediterranean, was an eye-opening experience.



GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

CERTIFICATE

The fastest time to visit all sovereign countries is 1 year and 193 days and was achieved by Cassandra De Pecol (USA) between 24 July 2015 and 2 February 2017.

OFFICIALLY AMAZING

Which region blows your mind more than any other?
Antarctica. If you're not a nature person, you're perhaps not going to see the value of such a place. However, once there, it's impossible not to be inspired by the vast, serene landscapes and seascapes. The wildlife in Antarctica, from various species of penguins, to the seals and birds, and the sounds they all make that echo far and wide, is so beautiful.

Floating on a Zodiac boat and hearing ice crush beneath me while approaching massive icebergs was a favorite moment. Another was entering Drake Passage during a huge storm, with 30-foot waves and 60-mph winds. Hands down, Antarctica blew me away—at some points almost literally—with its nature and visuals.

If you had an unlimited budget to go back to five of the 196 lands you visited, which ones are you picking?
Japan: I didn't get to spend enough time there, for budget reasons. Sweden: It's a goal of mine to own property in Sweden. My ancestors are from there, and I've always been fascinated with rural Nordic landscapes. I hope to get back soon—especially to the rural northern part. Afghanistan: It's come a long way with regards to women and athletics, especially running. Running's something I do wherever I travel. It's a bucket-list goal of mine to run the Afghanistan Marathon. Yemen: Socotra is a beautiful little island off mainland Yemen and another bucket-list place. Namibia: During my Expedition, I didn't have much time or budget to explore the depths of the Namibian dunes, under the stars. I'd like to spend a week in the country's desert.

Were you using translators?
Language barriers didn't turn out to be a big obstacle. I would pull up Google Translate whenever I needed to know what a word meant, or to communicate with a taxi driver, waitress, minister of tourism, etc. It was incredible—I could just type what I wanted to say and show them, and they would type in their language and show me. It was easy. Unless, that is, the language was Arabic or Thai and so on, where keyboards are very different. In those instances, I would usually find the most luxurious hotel in the area and walk in and ask for help. Typically in these hotels, the staff know English since they're dealing with an international clientele.

Where did you feel furthest from America?
Probably Juba in South Sudan. The airport infrastructure was the worst I'd seen. It was chaotic and all I wanted to do was help, but I couldn't. Everything was so different from American culture. Not necessarily in a bad way, aside from the airport, but I definitely felt a long way from home in South Sudan. The cuisine was very different. The landscapes, the infrastructure, and the overall way of life. The people of Sudan were really kind and helpful, though.

We love this bit from your blog: "The Best Travel Accessory Is An Open Mind. When You Leave All Preconceptions At The Door." Where did this wisdom most apply?
Everywhere. In order to get through the Expedition, I had to walk into each country with a completely open mind, leaving all preconceptions, good and bad, behind. People in westernized countries would tell me certain countries were dangerous and to "refrain from going alone." Or, on the flip side, that a country was "incredible." But I didn't want to be influenced by people's opinions of a place, whether Ukraine, France, Syria, and everywhere in between.

When I visited a country like Iraq, which at the time was dealing with ISIS, I would remind myself that the people living there had to survive and thrive and find happiness amid the chaos the same way people do in more stable countries. I wasn't going to travel in fear based on what other people said—including people who'd never set foot in these countries.

By leaving preconceptions at the door, I found myself judging places and people less, and looking at every human equally and as humans. I realized that, in the end, all people are the same, with basic human needs. No matter where they're from, everyone is working to have a roof over their heads, a hot meal in front of them, clean water, and someone who loves them.

How did you keep your incredible fitness during the Expedition?
I made a huge effort to eat as clean as possible and to go for a fasted walk every single morning, no matter where I was. I'd listen to a podcast, which would ground me, and then I'd be able to soak in the scenery and scents of the traditional mornings in every place I visited.

I also made an effort to work out in my hotel room. I later channeled those workouts into my fitness app. It's got a lot of equipment-free exercises I would do in my room. Needing to feel strong and confident as a solo female traveler, I also practiced my Krav Maga combatives. Vitamins helped, too. I was only sick once. I think vitamin C and electrolytes really helped me stay healthy and able to train.

Any moments that absolutely sucked or were scary?
A man walked into my hotel room using a swipe-key at 2 A.M. in Burkina Faso, West Africa. I didn't know who he was and he only spoke French. He must have worked there and seen me check in. I was also detained at the Grenada airport. They thought my ziplock bag full of vitamins was cocaine. At the Goma airport in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, I was about to leave the country when airport security told me I needed to "go in the back and get a polio shot." I didn't have proof of the vaccination on my Yellow Fever card. At the time, a polio vaccination wasn't necessary for entering or exiting the Congo. Secondly, why would they give me that vaccination if I were leaving the country? As I was not about to get some random needle stuck into my arm in an airport back room, I offered to give them $100. A woman came back with a counteroffer of $20 instead and that was the end of that.

At age 24, you were on Discovery's *Naked and Afraid*. Can you nutshell that experience?

It was both the best and worst experience of my life up to that point. Worst, because I was poorly represented when they edited all the footage to make the two-hour episode. I actually got hate mail and death threats, and still do. It was the best because all that hate ended up fueling me to travel every country in the world and become the first woman on record to do so.

I came up with the dream as I was curled up there in Panama, in the fetal position, naked, on a pile of dirt under banana leaves on a 54-degree night, with rain pouring through the leaves onto my bare back. That's when I asked myself, "What am I doing with my life?" And I got the idea to travel to every country and, while doing it, somehow enhance the world we live in.

Perhaps your biggest message is: Don't wait, pursue your dreams now. Can you elaborate?

We don't know when we're going to die. I've always wondered why people go about their lives assuming they'll be alive at 90. We can't know that. So unless a person is totally happy doing what they're doing, I think it's important to go after the things we desire. The things that will fuel your fire, that inspire you to make this life the very best one you can make.

We allow other people to have so much influence on ourselves and our decisions. And we look to other people as role models for inspiration. But if we just looked to ourselves for inspiration, we'd be surprised at how much we could achieve when it comes to things we're passionate about. I think it's important to let go of society's standards. Make sacrifices and take risks. Go after your greatest dreams, so on your death bed, you won't regret not having tried.

Lightning round: Is this space-travel thing going to happen? Is it true *SNL*'s "Weekend Update" mentioned you in 2017? And how about an update on the feline front?

In terms of space travel, it's up to Virgin Galactic! Can they successfully launch their first commercial flight? If I could speed up the process, I would. But it's a waiting game. Right now, it's up to science.

As for *SNL*, yes, it's true. Colin Jost mentioned my world travel and then made a joke about getting zika from a mosquito.

Kishmere is incredible! This year we've already been to Arizona and Colorado, with trips to Canada, New York, Bermuda, Mexico, and Hawaii coming up. He loves traveling. Honestly, I could not travel without him. He's a super cool cat. He doesn't scratch, bite, and is just pure love. All good on his end! You can follow his adventures on Instagram @mrkishmere.

What's your next big dream or challenge?

I have so many. You'll just have to keep up with me!

Find Cassie on Instagram and Twitter by going to @cassiedepecol. Or check out her website, cassiedepecol.com, download her app, World Fitness by Cassie, and learn more about her adventures in the book "Expedition 196."

GOING BACK

VETERANS OF OLDER WARS OFTEN RETURNED TO THE PLACES THEY FOUGHT. WITH IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN, IT'S DIFFERENT.

BY MATT GALLAGHER

IN 1985, writers and veterans of the Vietnam War gathered for a literary conference hosted by the Asia Society in New York City. It proved a contentious affair, as scribes committed to the hard truths of their combat experiences went after Tim O'Brien and other fiction writers for bending reality into something else. Five years before the publication of *The Things They Carried,* O'Brien laid out his case for more imagination in war stories.

"I think that 200 years, 700 years, a thousand years from now," he said at the end of a panel, "when Vietnam is filled with condominiums and we're all going there to vacation on the beautiful beaches, the experience of Vietnam—all the facts—will be gone. Who knows, a thousand years from now the facts will disappear—bit by bit by bit—and all that we'll be left with are stories. To me, it doesn't really matter if they're true stories."

Hot damn! That's both a snappy comeback and an artistic manifesto if I've ever seen one. Beyond O'Brien's prophetic vision, though, I was struck by his description of a future Vietnam he and his cohorts might vacation to. That must've seemed a fanciful notion during peak Reagan America. At the same conference two years later, Jim Webb, Secretary of the Navy, gave an impassioned speech bemoaning the dangers of Soviet access to the Pacific's warm-water ports via Vietnam—a geopolitical prediction that did not age as well as O'Brien's literary one.

Less than a decade later, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Vietnam's government went through its "Renovation," trade opened up between Vietnam and Uncle Sam. American tourists followed, including veterans, middle-aged now, some with families in tow, returning to see what had become of the place that took their youth and their friends. The beachfront condominiums O'Brien had dreamed about became reality.

Revisiting one's old war region is a tradition of sorts, not limited to the Vietnam generation. Vets like Hemingway became expatriates and stayed in Europe after World War I. Returning to France and the former Pacific theater was an international staple for the Greatest Generation.

When I was growing up, my best friend's father had two framed photographs propped side-by-side on his office desk—one of him as a young soldier, standing against a drab sky somewhere on the Korean peninsula in the fifties, and another showing him walking

PHOTO: MATT CARDY, STRINGER / GETTY

> **Placing my combat memories and experiences in a mental box and leaving them there is exactly what I needed to do to find a life afterward.**

the DMZ in the early nineties, part of a visiting political delegation.

Some things change, some don't. And yet, here in 2020, the idea of one day returning to Afghanistan or Iraq for something between pleasure and nostalgia seems as impossible as O'Brien's vision must've sounded in 1985. Open war still rages in the former, while sectarian conflict continues to pop off in the latter. As for American veterans of the more recent Syrian intervention, forget about it—returns require hotels, not rubble. Much of eastern Syria is still years away from even the possibility of economic recovery like that.

"I'd love to go back to the Korengal someday," my friend Scott Turner told me, referring to the infamous valley in eastern Afghanistan that's known for heavy conflict nearly every spring, what the locals call "fighting season." "It's legit beautiful there. But come on—what would that even look like? We book through Taliban Travel Agency? Stay at five-star Mujahideen Huts?"

Most of my fellow Iraq veterans I've spoken with feel similarly about a potential return. With the notable exception of the Kurdistan region in the north, there's not much affinity for the place we fought for and fought with and fought against. Recently I had beers with my gruff-voiced friend Matthew Mellina, who was stationed to the same part of central-west Iraq I was, two years apart. "Shit, man," he said. "Part of my mind's still over there, every night. Why would I need to walk that dirt again, too?"

Some Iraq veterans have found their way back to the country—as journalists. Nate Rawlings returned to Iraq in 2010 for *Time.* Roy Scranton returned in 2014 for *Rolling Stone.* Elliot Ackerman did the same for *Esquire* in 2017. And Phil Klay only recently returned from a devastated Mosul still recovering from the fight against ISIS. The parts of the country vary in these stories, as do the authors' intents and conclusions. But something they all share is a strange, perplexed relationship between the Iraq of their memories and the Iraq of their return. And to a man they all went back alone, on a job, searching for clarity but finding only more dark uncertainty.

Resolution, let alone peace, seems as distant for Iraq as ever. Bearing witness to that, and chronicling it, is important—even if it reminds its chroniclers how futile it all can be.

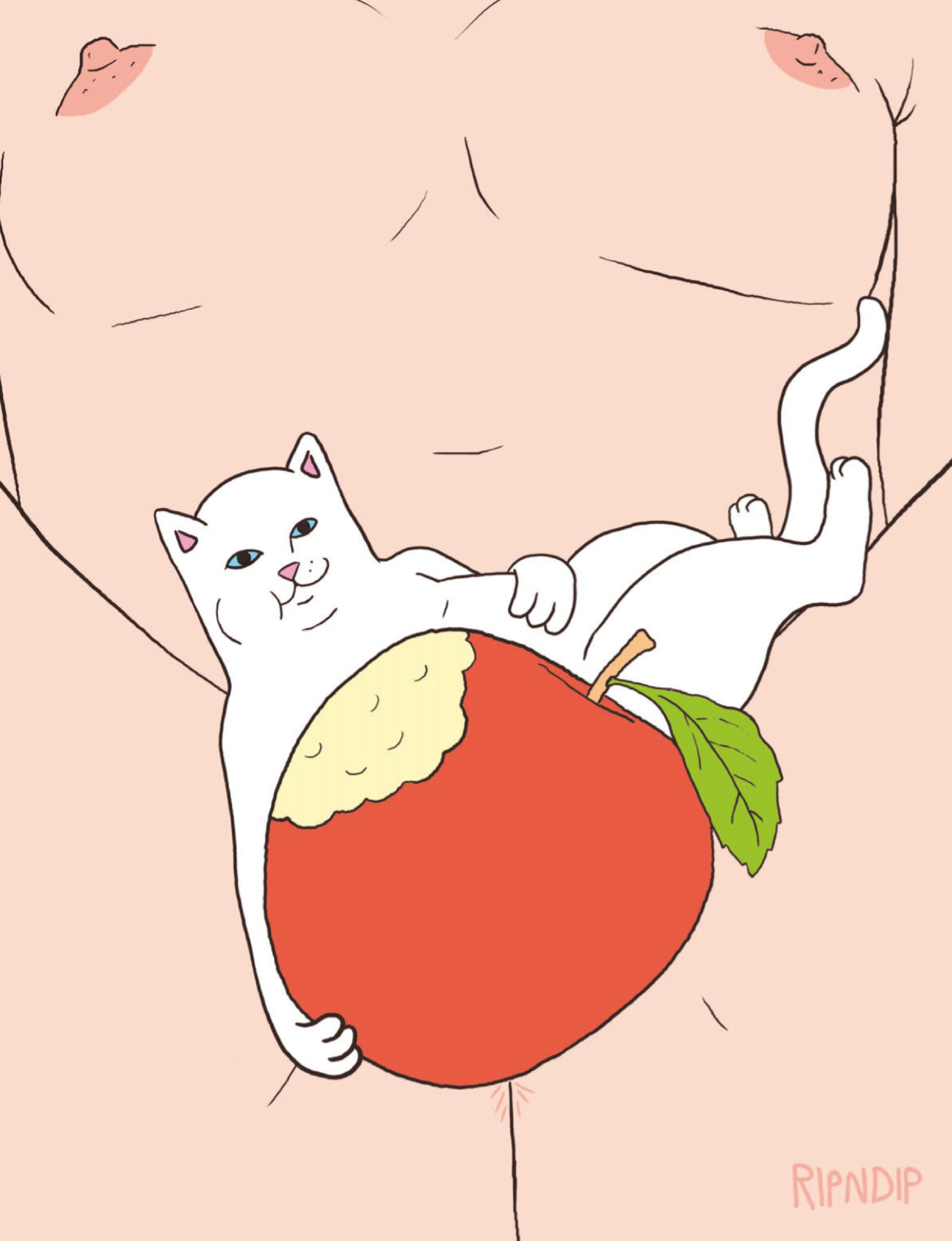
When I started drafting this column, I thought I'd end with some hazy optimistic shit suggesting that someday, maybe, I'll be able to take my wife and son and golden retriever to the corner of Babylon I gave my youth to, and lost friends in.

But as I thought about my friends' comments, and went back to the articles and essays of return, I realized that I want to do anything but. My own professional life may point me in the direction of Iraq someday, and for that, I'd consider going. But placing my combat memories and experiences in a mental box and leaving them there is exactly what I needed to do to find a life afterward.

Opening up all that for something as cheap and easy as nostalgia just wouldn't be worth it.

Matt Gallagher is a U.S. Army veteran and the author of three books, including "Empire City," newly published by Atria/Simon & Schuster.

PHOTO: FRAME STOCK FOOTAGES / SHUTTERSTOCK


RIPNDIP

Opposite page: Mirante Dona Marta viewpoint, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Above: self-portrait by del Valle

PAULO DEL VALLE

FROM ADIDAS TO COCA-COLA TO ADOBE,
THIS TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHER HAS WORKED WITH
SOME OF THE BIGGEST BRANDS IN THE WORLD,
AND HE'S NOT SLOWING DOWN ANYTIME SOON.

PHOTOS COURTESY PAULO DEL VALLE

PAULO del Valle wasn't supposed to end up a successful travel photographer. The 31-year-old was born in Rio de Janeiro to parents who worked in the medical field, and from a young age he was encouraged to follow in their footsteps.

"I spent my childhood thinking I was going to become a doctor like my parents and my sister," del Valle tells *Penthouse*. "But I sucked at biology. When I was studying medicine, I spent most of my time creating logos and websites for other people."

Eventually, one of his siblings convinced him to change gears and take his creative side more seriously. Despite how upsetting the news would be to his father, del Valle dropped out of medical school and enrolled in a design university.

"I don't think my dad really understood my choice to switch career paths," he admits. "Unfortunately, neither of my parents got to see me succeed as a photographer and entrepreneur because they both have Alzheimer's disease."

During design school, he began using Instagram to show off all the skills he was acquiring. When he wasn't in class, del Valle would spend hours watching YouTube tutorials about photography.

Instagram was a place where he could cast his work out into the world and see what resonated. Then in 2012, he struck gold when he became an Instagram Suggested User, which meant that his profile was being pushed to users all over the globe on a daily basis.

"I was getting about a thousand followers a day at that time, which made me want to learn more and improve my [photography] skills," del Valle says. "Most Suggested Users stay up on the page for two weeks, but I stayed up there for a year and a half! It was pure luck."

The attention he got on Instagram kick-started his career as a freelance travel photographer, and suddenly he found himself accepting opportunities from travel boards and agencies that wanted him to tour the world, promoting trips to Japan, Chile, Argentina, and New Zealand on his popping Instagram page.

"I met so many talented photographers on these trips," he recalls. (It was on one of these trips that del Valle met his wife, a Brazilian travel writer, when they were on assignment together in Canada.)

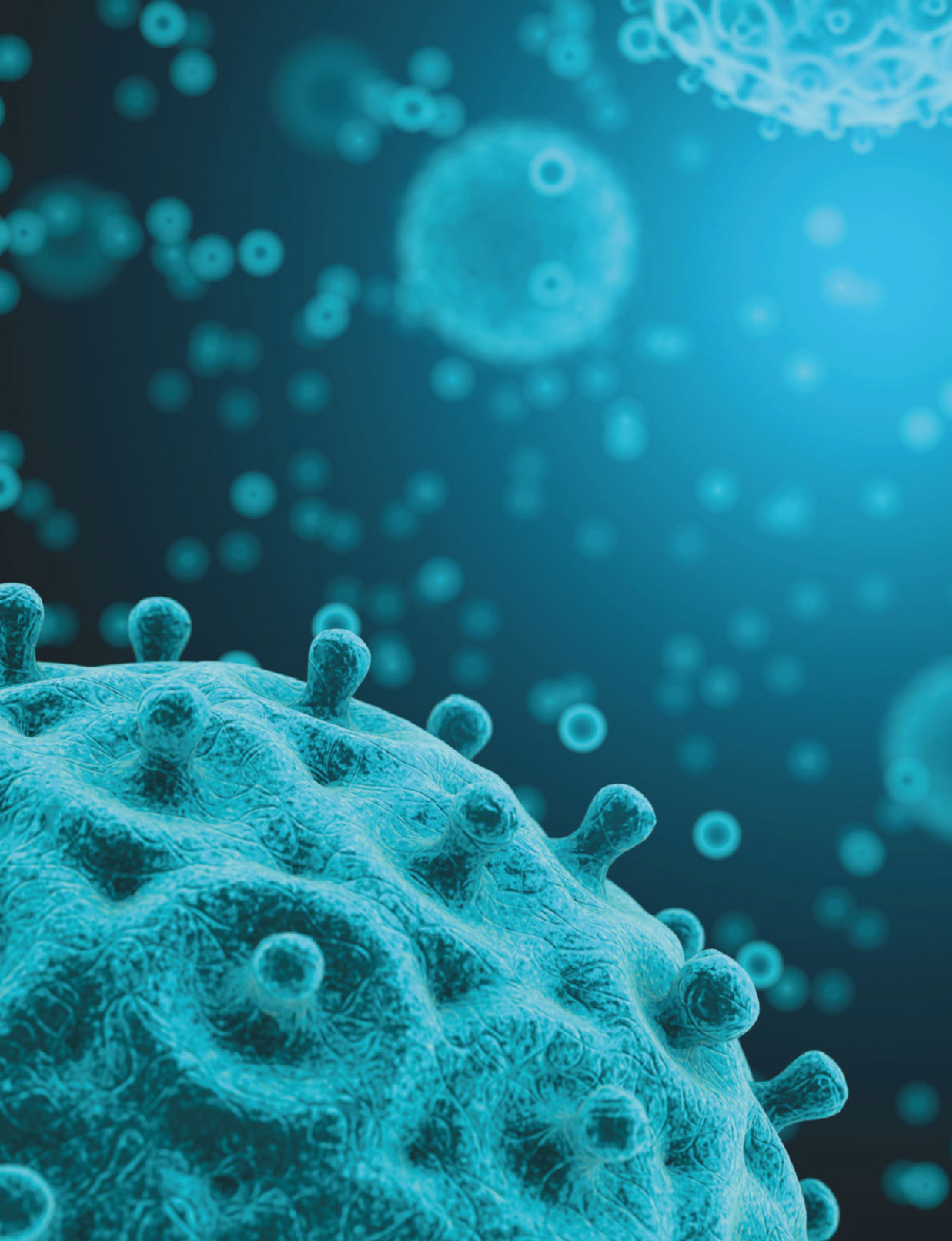
Bigger brands took notice and soon del Valle had gathered an impressive résumé, shooting campaigns for Adobe, Google, Facebook, Samsung, KAYAK, Nike, Adidas, Audi, and Land Rover.

He recently launched his own agency, Craft, and it's created official images for the global launches of Coca-Cola, Bombay Sapphire, and Motorola products. A proud Sony ambassador, del Valle has many business projects cooking this year, though right now his main focus is on his family and newborn daughter.

"As always, my goal is to share all the beauty I have the fortune to see through my camera lens," he says. "I want to inspire people to travel and create."

Find more of Paulo del Valle's work on Instagram: @paulodelvalle

Clockwise from top left: The Duomo seen from Piazzale Michelangelo, Florence, Italy; Torres del Paine National Park, Chile; Pont de Bir-Hakeim, Paris, France; Val d'Orcia, Tuscany, Italy. Opposite page: Al Ula, Saudi Arabia



GERMS IN THE ARSENAL

CORONAVIRUS THROUGH A BIOWEAPONS LENS.

BY ELTON CORNELL

WEEK after week early on, news about the coronavirus outbreak that began in Wuhan, China, in late 2019 kept getting worse. And with each passing day, the only thing we learned was how little we knew about it.

In places around the world, the number of infections and fatalities kept doubling. Every day brought another story of a city, region, or whole country on lockdown.

As with any high-profile, high-drama story, misinformation spread wildly. And because so much of what we heard was contradictory, it was easy to become unsure about what material to trust. Paranoia seemed almost mandatory.

Initially we were told the virus was transmitted from animals to humans at an open-air “wet market” in Wuhan. Then we heard that China’s premier high-security bioweapons lab is only a few hundred yards from that wet market.

Chinese doctors suddenly appeared with dire warnings about the outbreak and then disappeared just as quickly, leaving the world wondering if they were permanently silenced by the virus or by authorities. Even though the World Health Organization early on declared this new strain of the virus to be a global health emergency, Chinese officials wouldn’t permit physicians from America’s Centers for Disease Control to enter the region and conduct independent tests.

Some Russian media outlets said the virus was an American-made bioweapon designed to cripple a Chinese economy that’s putting its United States counterpart to shame. Other outlets claimed Chinese military officials were making the same allegation.

Meanwhile, American radio host Rush Limbaugh said the virus is likely “a ChiCom laboratory experiment” being used as part of a grander Chinese scheme to destroy Donald Trump.

Others insisted Chinese scientists stole the virus from a Canadian lab, while some said it was part of a population-control plot hatched at a private British institute.

At the start, when the only casualties were Asian, there were rumors that the virus was engineered specifically to kill Asians.

It all sounds crazy, right? An engineered virus, not a tragic twist of nature?

Except it gets less wacky and paranoid when you consider that for centuries, governments, armies, and lone-wolf terrorists have deliberately infected people with deadly biological agents.

ILLUSTRATIONS: CROCOTHERY; SKAMAI / SHUTTERSTOCK

DID A MEDIEVAL SIEGE LAUNCH THE BLACK DEATH?

The earliest recorded occurrence of biological warfare comes in the Hittite texts of 1500-1200 B.C., which describe victims of tularemia—aka rabbit fever—being relocated into enemy territory to cause an epidemic.

In the fourth century B.C., Scythian archers would dip arrowheads into animal feces to add infectious potential to their flesh-piercing points. Ancient Roman warriors were said to dip their swords into excrement and corpses, leaving victims both slashed and infected with tetanus.

In what may be history's deadliest use of bioweapons, the outbreak of bubonic plague—the Black Death—that ravaged Europe in the mid-1300s may have started, some believe, during the 1346 siege of the Crimean city of Kaffa, when the plague-infected corpses of Mongol warriors were tossed over walls into the fortified town.

It's speculated that the inhabitants of Kaffa were then infected, leading to a continental domino effect that may have snuffed out as many as 25 million European lives.

The last known incident of an army attacking its enemy with plague-infected corpses occurred in 1710, when Russian aggressors tossed cadavers over the walls of Reval in Sweden.

It's well known that the European conquest of the New World was facilitated far less by military aggression than by all the diseases—smallpox, measles, influenza, the bubonic plague, and more—Europeans brought over with them. Some historians estimate that these scourges killed up to 95 percent of the New World's indigenous population.

However, this mass death was almost entirely accidental. The only recorded incident of a deliberate sickening of native people involved the "gift" in 1763 of two smallpox-infected blankets from British soldiers to Delaware Indians.

A letter from one British commander to another expressed the intent to "Inocculate the Indians by means of Blankets, as well as to try Every other method that can serve to Extirpate this Execrable Race."

Though it's not clear whether the blankets successfully transmitted smallpox to the Delaware Indians, smallpox subsequently took the lives of 500,000 to 1.5 million Native Americans.

WORLD WARS, BIOBOMBS, AND FEVER SPRAY

The first World War brought unprecedented carnage to Europe. It also featured more sophisticated methods of germ warfare, thanks to advances in microbiology. German agents used anthrax and glanders to weaken Romanian sheep, Argentinian livestock, and French and American cavalry horses. On the flip side, French saboteurs infected German-bound horses with glanders.

As for World War II, evidence strongly suggests that in the Battle of Stalingrad, Russian forces deliberately infected up to 100,000 German soldiers with a rare respiratory form of rabbit fever. The mode of transmission was most likely an aerosol spraying campaign.

The most notorious WWII bioweapons facility was the Japanese military's Unit 731, a sprawling compound of 150 or so buildings near the Chinese city of Harbin.

By deliberately planting typhoid fever and cholera into Chinese water systems, as well as dropping ceramic containers holding plague-infected fleas onto Chinese cities, Unit 731's biological weapons are thought to have killed anywhere from 200,000 to 580,000 people.

In what was known as "Operation Cherry Blossoms at Night," Japanese forces planned to target San Diego with balloons containing plague-infected fleas, but Japan surrendered a month before the operation's launch date.

THE COLD WAR AND GERM WEAPONIZING

Invading Russian forces captured some of Unit 731's operatives, but most faced no postwar confinement (or prosecution) after cutting a deal with the Americans to share classified data about their unprecedentedly cruel experiments on live subjects.

Throughout the Cold War, communist propagandists accused America of using bioweapons, whether against enemy forces during the Korean War or by systematically treating the Cuban populace as biological guinea pigs.

Although the U.S. denies these allegations—as you might expect—what's undisputed is that America started its own bioweapons program during WWII and kept it running until the end of the sixties.

The U.S. Army Biological Warfare Laboratories were established at Maryland's Camp Detrick in the spring of 1943. Before being shut down by Richard Nixon's executive order in 1969—a year when the program's budget approached $300 million—Army technicians researched smallpox, anthrax, brucellosis, botulism, plague, hantavirus, yellow fever, typhus, bird flu, and other diseases.

The biological weapons they produced were then tested at Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah, as well as other open-air venues, often upon unsuspecting civilians.

During 1954's "Operation Big Itch,"

cardboard bombs containing hundreds of thousands of uninfected fleas were dropped to see if the fleas would remain alive and attach themselves to human hosts—which they did.

In May 1955's "Operation Big Buzz," 300,000 mosquitoes infected with yellow fever were dispersed by air and on the ground across parts of Georgia. And in "Project Bellwether" during the late 1950s and early 1960s, researchers at Dugway Proving Grounds continued dropping untold numbers of infected mosquitoes onto an unwitting American public.

During Senate subcommittee hearings in 1977, Army officials revealed that between 1949 and 1969, they conducted 239 open-air tests of biological agents on unaware soldiers and civilians.

In September 1950, a U.S. Navy ship sprayed the pathogen Serratia marcescens toward the shores of San Francisco for a solid week. Subsequent testing revealed the pathogen had traveled more than 30 miles, leading to a sudden spike in pneumonia and rare urinary tract infections.

In 1951, the Army exposed African-Americans to the fungus Aspergillus fumigatus to determine if they were more vulnerable than whites to the infection.

In 1966's infamous "Subway Experiment," researchers dropped bacteria-filled light bulbs onto tracks in midtown Manhattan and discovered the microbes spread for miles.

In a 1968 report, the Army concluded that, "Similar covert attacks with a pathogenic disease-causing agent during peak traffic periods could be expected to expose large numbers of people to infection and subsequent illness or death."

Since the Cold War was one giant death race, the Soviets were busy stockpiling their own caches of biological weapons. Together, the Soviets and Americans produced enough nasty germs and viruses to kill everyone on Earth several times over.

In the 1920s, predating even the atrocities of Unit 731, Soviet authorities experimented with typhus, glanders, and melioidosis on live human subjects at the gulag on the Solovetsky Islands.

In the 1970s, even though they had signed a pledge to discontinue bioweapons development, the Russians' Biopreparat program employed an estimated 50,000 people.

Since humans are prone to error, this led to an accidental aerosol release of smallpox in 1971 that sickened ten and killed three. It also led to an accidental leak of anthrax in 1979 that claimed more than a hundred lives. It's speculated that if winds had been blowing in the opposite direction, anthrax would have spread into urban areas and possibly killed hundreds of thousands.

In a top-secret 1980s program ironically dubbed "Ecology," the Soviet Ministry of Agriculture developed variants of livestock-killing diseases designed to be sprayed from airplanes over hundreds of miles.

Thirty years ago, after the lead Soviet scientist investigating the bioweapon potential of lethal Marburg virus died of the disease, authorities discovered that the variant taken from the man's organs was more powerful than the original.

The Soviet Ministry of Defense weaponized this new, super-deadly strain, which they called "Variant U."

But lest you think it was only the Americans and Soviets, the U.K. conducted bioweapon experiments throughout the first half of last century and became the first nation to successfully weaponize biological weapons for mass production. British researchers also bombarded Scotland's Gruinard Island with anthrax for more than half a century.

Although Israel denies it, the International Red Cross reported that during the 1948 War for Independence, an Israeli militia released Salmonella typhi bacteria into the water supply of Acre, leading to an outbreak of typhoid fever in the port city.

During the Rhodesian Bush War (1964-1979), the Rhodesian government deliberately contaminated water along the Mozambique border with cholera.

After the Persian Gulf War in 1991, Iraq admitted it had produced 19,000 liters of concentrated botulinum toxin, and loaded 10,000 liters onto military weapons.

As far as China's bioweapons program goes, it's anyone's guess. The country's officials are masters of propaganda and secrecy, leading to the possibility that we may never be able to definitively rule out the idea of an intentional origin for this new coronavirus strain.

PHOTOS: EVERETT HISTORICAL; SYDA PRODUCTIONS / SHUTTERSTOCK

BIOLOGICAL TERRORISM

Compared to conventional incendiary weapons, bioweapons are easy and cheap to produce—as well as difficult to detect. Not to mention a would-be DIY bioterrorist can take as many lives with a nickel's worth of rogue germs as a government could with $10,000 in conventional weapons.

The documentary *Bioterror* quotes Larry Wayne Harris, identified only as "a former member of a white supremacist group," who explains how cheap and simple it is for ordinary citizens to acquire deadly toxins.

"Biologicals level the playing field," Harris points out. "Before [there were] governments with massive stockpiles of nuclear weapons, with aircraft carriers, with all types of machine guns, stuff of this nature. The private populace did not have these. But trying to use a tank against a bottle of germs is stupid."

In 1972, Chicago police arrested a pair of radical leftist college students who had planned to poison the city's water supply with typhus.

In what's known as the single largest bioterrorist attack in American history, in 1984, Oregon cultists who followed Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh deliberately poured a brown liquid containing salmonella into salad bars at ten local restaurants in an attempt to incapacitate a sufficient number of ordinary citizens to swing an election in the cult's favor.

A total of 751 people were poisoned, 45 of whom were hospitalized, but no one died.

In 2001, a week after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Americans were gripped with fear about a rash of letters containing anthrax spores that were sent to public officials. At least 22 people were made sick by the letters, and five people died, including two postal workers.

It remains to be seen how much total death and destruction this coronavirus pandemic will cause before a vaccine arrives, if one does.

Those who speculate about a lab origin for the virus can point to clues, rather than hard evidence or expert consensus. But is such speculation pure lunacy? It's a pretty crazy world right now. Crazy developments seem the new norm. And bioweapons are very real. Sometimes it seems a little crazy thinking is warranted.

Elton Cornell is a lover of fine wine, curvy women, and V-8 engines. He's always right, but he takes no pleasure in it because the rest of the world is always wrong.

PHOTOS / ART: PHOTOVOVA; WAROENG VECTOR; NOBEASTSOFIERCE; KATERYNA KON; RAJ CREATIONZS / SHUTTERSTOCK

ENCYCLOPEDIA PANDEMICA

HISTORY'S DEADLIEST OUTBREAKS

The strain of coronavirus that emerged in late 2019 in Wuhan, China, spread throughout the globe and is thus officially a pandemic—a term describing an outbreak occurring across multiple continents. The virus has claimed more than 300,000 lives as the world holds its breath and hopes things don't go from very bad to apocalyptic.

The following diseases have led to the deadliest pandemics in history. Since these fatalities have occurred over centuries, even millennia, under conditions where record-keeping was often sloppy at best, the body counts are only estimated.

SMALLPOX (VIRAL)

ESTIMATED ALL-TIME DEATH TOLL: 300-500 MILLION

Spread with alarming ease through contact with infected persons—or even items that they've merely touched—smallpox begins with a rash that leads to pus-filled blisters that lead to scabs and scars and lesions and howling pain and blindness and death. It's been cutting human lives short for 12,000 years and was one of the deadliest agents in the near-genocide of Native Americans that occurred after Europeans arrived bearing their Old World diseases.

MEASLES (VIRAL)

ESTIMATED ALL-TIME DEATH TOLL: 300 MILLION

Able to live two hours in airspace where someone's coughed or sneezed, measles is so infectious it will sicken nine of ten unvaccinated/nonimmune people in one household. In 2000, measles was declared eliminated in the U.S., but last year, with more kids not being vaccinated, cases approached 1,300. Globally, it still kills nearly a million annually. In 1875, on the island of Fiji, measles cut down a third of the population; survivors torched entire villages, often burning the sick alive.

MALARIA (PARASITIC)

ESTIMATED ALL-TIME DEATH TOLL: 300 MILLION

Spread via mosquito bite, a staggering 350-600 million new cases of malaria occur every year with a fatality rate of just under a half of one percent. Malaria's existence has been documented since at least the time of the ancient Roman Empire (where it was known as "Roman Fever"), and its prevalence is thought to have been a contributing factor in pulling ancient Rome down into the Dark Ages.

BUBONIC PLAGUE (BACTERIAL)

ESTIMATED ALL-TIME DEATH TOLL: 250 MILLION

Transmitted through bites from fleas who became infected after sucking the blood of diseased rats, the bubonic plague almost wiped out Europe twice—during the Plague of Justinian (541-542), in which half of the continent's population died, and during the more infamous "Black Death" (1346-1353), which by some estimates wiped out two-thirds of Europe's entire population. The last great plague pandemic was in China during the 1850s and took out 12 million souls.

INFLUENZA (VIRAL)

ESTIMATED ALL-TIME DEATH TOLL: 200 MILLION

History's deadliest flu pandemic was the so-called "Spanish Flu" of 1918-1920, which infected one-third of the entire world's population and killed anywhere from 50-100 million people. It coincided with World War I but almost doubled that bloody conflict's overall death toll. It was so widespread that even the King of Spain and U.S. President Woodrow Wilson came down with the bug. There have been other flu pandemics such as the Russian Flu and the Hong Kong Flu, but none have come close to the Spanish Flu's murderous ferocity.

TUBERCULOSIS (BACTERIAL)

ESTIMATED ALL-TIME DEATH TOLL: 200 MILLION

Since it's an airborne germ and the air is free, an estimated one in every three living humans has been exposed to TB. The infection will remain latent and non-transmissible in 90-95 percent of cases. But when the infection becomes active, symptoms include night sweats, chills, chest pain, and coughing up blood. If left untreated, TB can mean a quick trip to the grave.

CHOLERA (BACTERIAL)

ESTIMATED ALL-TIME DEATH TOLL: 100 MILLION

Acquired primarily through contaminated water and causing dehydration, vomiting, and pale, slightly milky diarrhea, cholera has been documented since the time of the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates. It remained relatively quiet for several centuries, until a series of seven pandemics emerged from India's Ganges River starting in 1817 and persisting through the 1900s. In the 1990s, a new strain of cholera was detected that may signal a looming eighth pandemic.

TYPHUS (BACTERIAL)

ESTIMATED ALL-TIME DEATH TOLL: 50 MILLION

Typically spread via lice or fleas, dirty water, crowded jail cells, or other conditions involving poor sanitation, typhus starts off with flulike symptoms before causing telltale red dots to spread all over the body. The dots blossom into foul-smelling open sores while the victim's mind unspools into feverish delirium. A slow, painful death follows. It's suspected that typhus caused the Plague of Athens (430 B.C.), killing a quarter of the city's population. As Napoleon retreated from Moscow in 1812, more of his soldiers died from typhus than were killed by Russians. Speaking of Russians, three million of them fell victim to typhus during World War I alone.

AIDS (VIRAL)

ESTIMATED ALL-TIME DEATH TOLL: 40 MILLION

Believed to have first been transmitted from chimps to humans in West Africa in the 1920s, close to two-thirds of global HIV cases are still clustered in Africa. South of the Sahara, an estimated five percent of the population is currently HIV-positive, meaning the overall death toll may eclipse 90-100 million in the next five years. After emerging in Africa, the virus was spotted in Haiti in the 1960s, then moved quietly to New York and San Francisco in the 1970s. It finally made global headlines in the early 1980s when a mysterious "gay cancer" was correlated to a sudden spike in deaths among young gay men.

EROTIC PHOTOGRAPHER

PAUL ARTEMIS

THIS ITALIAN-BORN PHOTOGRAPHER FOUGHT DEPRESSION WITH HIS ART.

PAUL Artemis admits that his first taste of erotic photography came from this magazine. Now living in London, the 45-year-old photographer was born and raised in Rome, Italy, where he used to sneak looks at Italian *Penthouse* as a teen at the barbershop.

"It was the early nineties, before the explosion of the internet, and *Penthouse* significantly built my erotic world," Artemis remembers. "Femme fatales in sheer stockings, see-through lingerie, and high heels defined new boundaries of sensuality. I remember all those iconic Penthouse Pets, like Amy Lynn Baxter, Samantha Phillips, and Chloe Jones, whose beauty seemed unreal to me. I would have never imagined I'd end up taking photos of women like that myself one day."

When Artemis was a boy, his father gave him a manual camera that he played around with on vacations. But only in the late nineties did he get serious about the art form after overcoming a serious stint of depression. Looking for an escape from the hopelessness he felt, Artemis began researching photography and discovered his passion—a discovery that brought meaning and purpose to his drifting life.

"I started visiting bookshops and libraries a few times a week to study essential photographers like Irving Penn, Helmut Newton, Jeanloup Sieff, Horst P. Horst, and Sarah Moon," he recalls. "Books on artists like Edward Hopper, Tamara de Lempicka, Oskar Kokoschka, Egon Schiele, and Vincent Van Gogh became like school to me."

During the summer of 1999, Artemis took off for Ireland with his Rolleiflex camera, 20 rolls of black-and-white film, and some clothes stuffed into a backpack. He still remembers the weight of his vintage camera and its analog operation—how it shaped a new reality for him as he reveled in his solitude and reflected on his mental state.

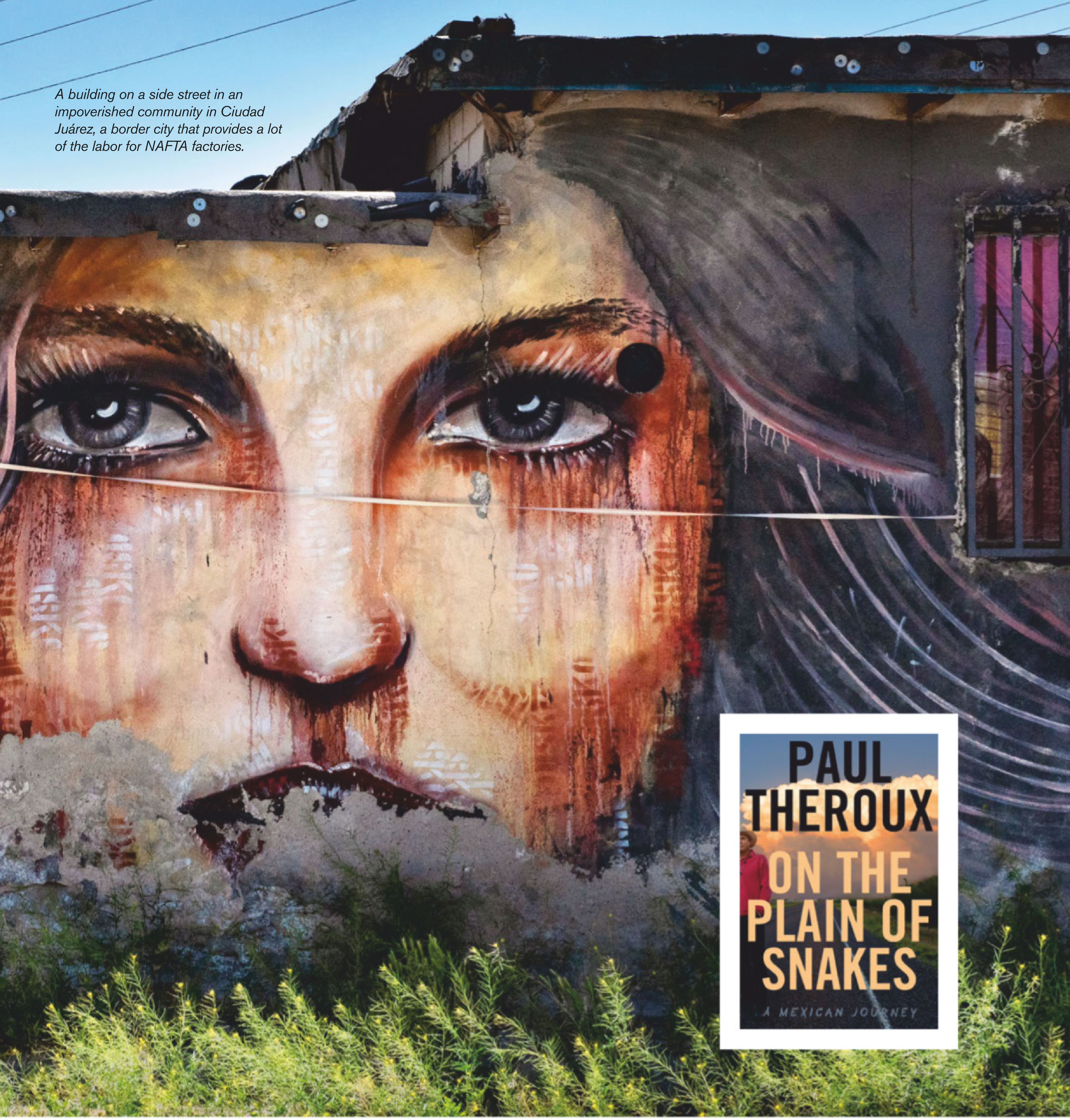
"[Photography] gave me purpose," he explains. "It allowed me to discover worlds hiding in plain sight between the lines of reality."

Today, Artemis has built a strong following of commercial and private clients, and has made fans around the world with his dramatic shots of gorgeous women posted on Instagram. This year, he's working with London's Royal Ballet on a photography project focused on dance and movement, due to exhibit in 2021. Other than that, he's busy with his usual commissions.

"Photographing women is one way of rejoicing harmony with the universe," Artemis says. "Beauty is the closest thing to a god that I can conceive. It lends substance to love and offers men salvation in this world by giving life meaning."

Instagram: @paulartemis3

A building on a side street in an impoverished community in Ciudad Juárez, a border city that provides a lot of the labor for NAFTA factories.


PAUL THEROUX
ON THE PLAIN OF SNAKES
A MEXICAN JOURNEY

Theroux (right) and local man in Ciudad Miguel Alemán's main plaza.

A child street performer in Oaxaca.

INTERVIEW

To the Ends of the Earth

THE INCREDIBLE, AUDACIOUS, VORACIOUS LIFE OF WORLD-WANDERER PAUL THEROUX, AMERICA'S GREATEST TRAVEL WRITER.

INTERVIEW BY ALEXANDER BISLEY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE MCCURRY

A FEW years back, writer Paul Theroux, after a lifetime of adventure and a career spanning 52 books, bought an old Buick, pointed it south, and had another epic, surprise-filled travel experience, getting to know a place he hadn't crisscrossed before.

Living out his philosophy of immersion in the unfamiliar, Theroux, now 79, spent months road-tripping solo through Mexico, border to border, backcountry to brothels.

Stay longer, travel deeper—that's his mantra. These days based in Cape Cod and Hawaii, the Massachusetts-born Theroux spent the sixties in Africa and Singapore, the seventies in England, and has taken trains from London to Japan, from Boston to Argentina. He's paddled a kayak between South Pacific atolls. He's explored New Guinea, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, and many other far-flung corners of the world.

Theroux isn't a sightseer with a camera. He believes shooting photographs distracts from the ability to closely observe and remember. Eschewing hot spots and landmarks, he veers off the beaten track, talks to hundreds of people from all walks of life, and plunges into a place's history, customs, literature, food, art, politics, landscape, and dreams.

Author of acclaimed travel books, novels, and short fiction (his Honduras-set novel *The Mosquito Coast* became a 1986 Harrison Ford movie), Theroux wants most of all to understand the lives of people in the places he visits.

As documented in *On the Plain of Snakes: A Mexican Journey,* published last fall, Theroux drove the entire 1,954-mile U.S.-Mexico border before heading south, zigzagging down to the Guatemala border, in the state of Chiapas. Then he turned around and drove back—a prodigious road trip, and one which followed the 25,000 miles he logged driving the back roads of Mississippi, South Carolina, and other states, for his 2015 book *Deep South.*

This time Theroux ventured deep into Mexico's rural, mountainous heart and spent weeks in Mexico City, where he taught a writing class. He studied Spanish in the impoverished state of Oaxaca. He met Zapatista revolutionaries in Chiapas, and indigenous people in Puebla.

In Nogales, near the U.S. border, he met Maria, a Zapotec woman from the Oaxacan highlands. She'd gotten lost in the Arizona desert, was rounded up by Border Patrol, and deposited in Nogales. She was still hoping for a menial job in America, she told Theroux, so she could send money back to her three young children and mother in a remote village.

"Sometimes, a single person, met casually on a journey, can be a powerful inspiration," writes the author, who says he thought often of Maria's story.

Funny, forthright, and engaging in print, America's greatest travel writer is the same way in conversation.

Above: The border fence from the Arizona side of Nogales.

Below: In Brownsville, Texas, a cross memorializes a migrant who died on this spot. There is hardly a stretch of border wall that does not have such a cross.

Mexico, you write, "eludes the generalizer and summarizer; it is too big, too complex, too diverse in its geography and culture, too messy and multilingual." What's a misconception about the country that grates on you?
The biggest is that Mexicans are intending to go to the U.S. to be parasitical. The opposite is the case. Most Mexicans I met on the border and elsewhere cross into the U.S. to work, usually at very hard jobs—roofing, drywall, meat processing plants, or harvesting.

What's something travelers might like to know about Mexico?
I'm not really a foodie, but what amazed me was the quality of restaurants in the bigger cities—great traditional food and fabulous fusion cuisine, by imaginative chefs. Except for Los Cabos and Mazatlán, I did not spend any time in the resort towns and cities, so I'm thinking of places like Mexico City, Puebla, Oaxaca, and San Cristóbal—too many great restaurants to mention.

Your account of visiting the red-light district in Nuevo Laredo, called "Boys' Town," is fascinating. What do you want readers to take from these passages?
Mexico has an inspired social sense that it has put into action. In many towns and cities it's called the Zona de Tolerancia—the part of town where you can meet women, socialize, head for hunka-chunka, get drunk and puke on your shoes, without being arrested or reprimanded. Demonizing hookers and johns is stupid and hypocritical. Okay, sort out the pimps—fine. But willing sex workers and their customers should not be arrested.

Is there a Mexican place that's been on your mind lately?
A devastating earthquake leveled Juchitán in 2017—major destruction. The Oaxacan town was in the news when it happened. But then it dropped out of the news, though the town was still desperate. I wonder how well it's doing. I met wonderful and resourceful people there, including the *muxes*—the thousands of transgender folks, a long tradition in Juchitán.

Has the transgender travel writer Jan Morris inspired you at all?
I think she's one of the greatest descriptive writers in travel, a great historian, and her personal story—man into woman—is just amazing. Her wide reading and humor have inspired me. She has this English ability to do a lot of homework.

"You are a trigger-happy little bastard," Hunter S. Thompson once wrote to you, with affection. What was he like?
Hunter! What an incredible guy, with an opinion about everything—women, guns, drugs, sports, politics, Hawaii, you name it. He had a tendency to call me—and others—at ungodly hours, just to talk. Being with him was a vitalizing experience, and what struck me was how bold he was in his writing, but how vulnerable in the flesh. He would have had a field day writing about politics today, and he would have skewered the GOP as well as the Democrats for yapping and flailing around and getting nowhere.

You hung out with Anthony Bourdain in Hawaii, appearing on *Parts Unknown*. How is he best remembered?
Bourdain's suicide was, to me, unfathomable. I reread his *Kitchen Confidential* looking for clues—and found some. His mentions of "darkness," and the way he might say, "The next few years were tough," with nothing more about what made it tough.

I think in his case it's *cherchez la femme* ["look for the woman"], but one never knows. He had everything a man might want—health, strength, looks, money, fame, women, intelligence. The takeaway? Maybe that's not enough. The day I spent with him was one of the happiest in my life, and I think many others could say the same.

Can you say a word about your son Louis's documentaries on America's sexual mores?
I love Louis's work. I admire it, I'm in awe of his work ethic. I can say the same about my older son, Marcel, who also makes great documentaries and writes novels. What pleases me most is that others praise my kids. I value my relationship with my children and cannot help seeing them as "my boys."

The U.S. border wall in Nogales, Arizona.

A celebrant in a Day of the Dead procession, Oaxaca.

Nogales, Mexico

> **"My sustaining secret in my Mexico trip was the strength I got from not telling anyone where I was going—having no deadlines or obligations. I was generally in my car, tooling up and down the country, stopping wherever I wanted. Complete freedom."**

You have some criticisms of the #MeToo movement, right?
A big criticism, yes. You see, it is a spectrum. The wonderful broadcaster Leonard Lopate at NPR in NYC lost his job for saying to a woman, "Hey, did you know 'avocado' is the Aztec word for 'testicle'?" The woman reported him for harassment.

Then there is big fat Harvey Weinstein injecting his pee-pee with Viagra and jamming a woman's head against it, or else flinging his whale-like bulk on top of the starlet. Leonard's smart remark is not the same as Harvey's rape, and the ladies—and men—might consider that there are degrees of insult, from the verbal riposte to the violent assault. These days every grievance is shoved into the same barrel. I hate this hypersensitive age. Among other things, it has cast a blight on books, music, and much else.

In your 2018 essay collection *Figures in a Landscape,* you write: "How important keeping secrets is to a writer. Secrets are a source of strength." What's a secret you share in *On the Plain of Snakes*?
My sustaining secret in my Mexico trip was the strength I got from not telling anyone where I was going—having no deadlines or obligations. I was generally in my car, tooling up and down the country, stopping wherever I wanted. Complete freedom.

How about a secret you've never revealed?
The whole point of secrets is that you don't reveal them. If you do, it's not a secret!

What journeys and books are you most proud of?
I'm proud of having traveled overland alone from Cairo to Cape Town in *Dark Star Safari,* and paddling my kayak among the Pacific Islands in *Happy Isles of Oceania,* and driving my own car up and down Mexico. But what pleased me most among my 50-odd books was writing *The Mosquito Coast*—knowing I had a good idea, and spending two and half years making it into a novel.

After Nelson Mandela became leader of a free, multiracial South Africa, *The Mosquito Coast* was chosen, in about 1992, to be a book for the country's high school students—"required reading." A great memory.

You write this of Hawaii: "I am still trying to make sense of it all, but the longer I live here, the more the mystery deepens." How do you see Hawaii's future?
Bleak—like the world's. Last year, ten-and-a-half million tourists descended upon the fragile islands. That's too many. Venice is sinking, China is germ-laden, Africa's vast population looks unsustainable. I love living in Hawaii for half the year, but I live in a hidden and wooded corner of it. Paul Bowles was asked this question once. He replied—and I agree—"It just gets worse." A good reason to get a six-pack, or a big fat doobie, and get wasted.

As for Africa, in *Figures,* you write, "The American God-botherers and evangelists demanding baptisms and screaming, 'Sinners!'—and 40 years of virtue-industry CEOs faffing around with other people's money and getting no results." Further comment?
The situation is pretty much the same. When people are determined to fuck up the world, there is very little you can do to stop them.

***On the Plain of Snakes* got a great reception. Do you have any complaints?**
Oprah chose a crappy book about Mexico [*American Dirt*] for her book club. Then all that controversy erupted. She should have chosen mine, man!

What's kept you inspired to write over so many years?
I could give you a flippant answer, citing money, chicks, travel—but the truth is that the act of writing is inspiring, and I have found great freedom in being a writer; that freedom has brought me joy and inspiration. I have no other job, no boss, no deadlines. I consider myself lucky and well-rewarded.

What's next?
I have a brilliant idea for a travel book, but at the moment I'm working on a novel, set in Hawaii, about a big-wave surfer, of the sort I have known for the past 30 years—great guys, real heroes with the sort of fanaticism I admire.

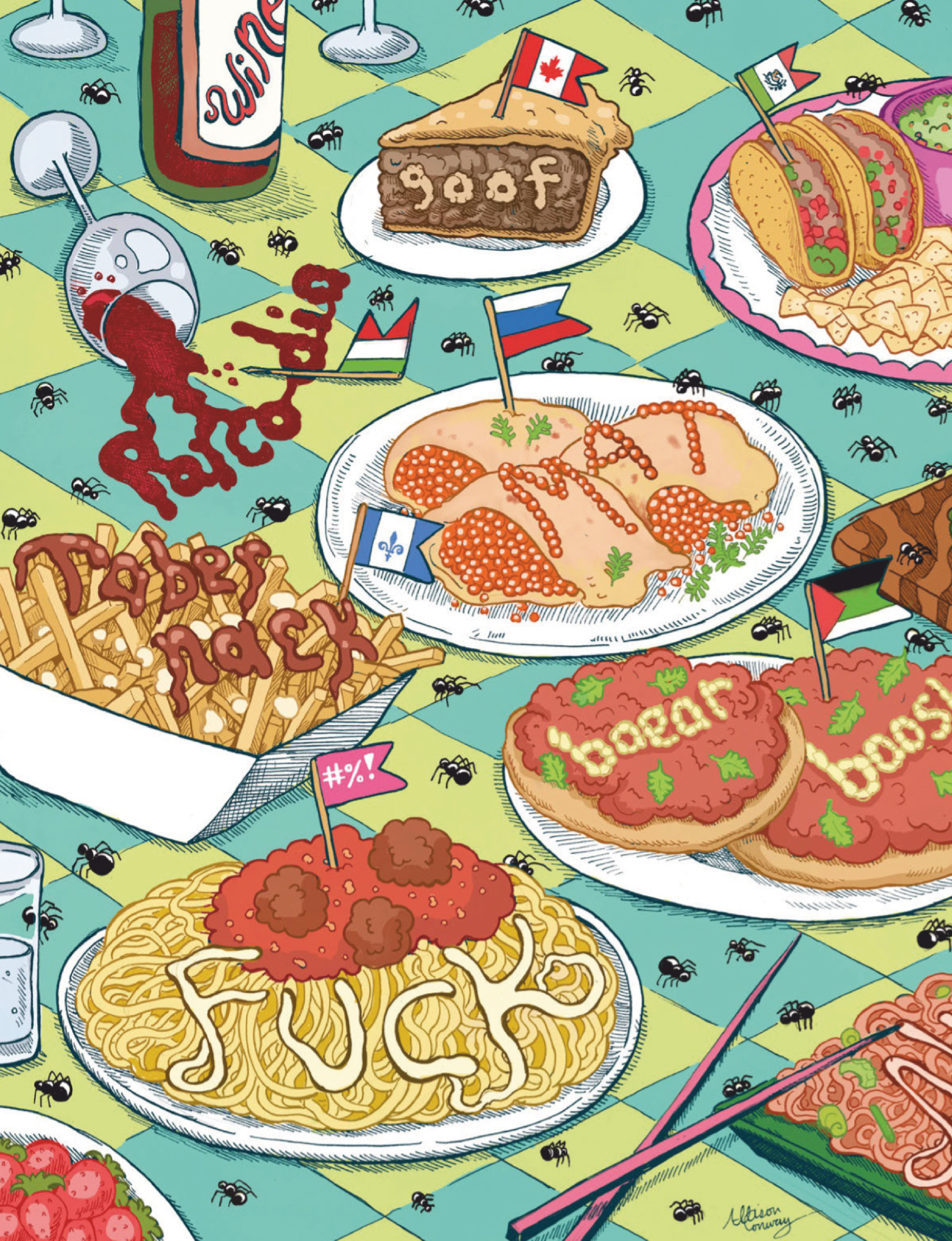
Alexander Bisley is a writer whose previous interview subjects include Anthony Bourdain, Andrew O'Hagan, Rashida Jones, Rose Byrne, and John Kerry. Follow him @alexanderbisley

A U.S. Border Patrol officer in Nogales, Arizona.

Theroux at the Comedor in Nogales, Mexico, talking to a man who was deported after working 12 years in America.

Late afternoon mezcal in Oaxaca.

Theroux on the Ciudad Juárez side of the border, along the culvert that contains the Rio Grande, a trickle here in the dry season.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How To Say “Fuck” Around The World

BY THOMAS MORTON
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALLISON CONWAY

THE first things any good traveler learns when he or she visits a new country are the basic words and phrases of its native tongue. Hello and goodbye. Thank you. Please. Coffee, water, beer. And though it’s a little more advanced, we’d also recommend, *I’m deeply sorry for the public urination, officer. My bladder was about to burst.*

But the second thing? How to swear like a trucker.

There’s a scene in Don DeLillo’s novel *The Names* where an American living in Greece is driving with some British friends. He mistakenly turns into a one-way Athens street and the driver coming at him gestures obscenely and yells a Greek word unfamiliar to the American. One of the Brits translates: “Masturbator.”

Another Brit chastises the American for his ignorance, arguing that learning “local terms of abuse and the words for sex acts and natural wastes” is a mark of respect for the culture.

Meanwhile, Nobel Prize-winning Mexican poet Octavio Paz says cussing is “the only living language in a world of anemic vocables.”

And you know what? The fucker’s right!

Curse words are not only the funniest, most exciting part of any language, they’re also a great way to blend in with locals and tap into a place’s psyche.

Consider “shit.” What does it say about us that we use the word for everything from actual excrement to our personal possessions to a bratty little kid?

Or take “motherfucker.” Any foreigner unclear on our society’s stance on incest would get set straight pretty motherfucking fast if they heard us spit out the word.

There’s also a practical reason for boning up on foreign profanities and slurs: It can save your ass. Knuckleheads, skinheads, fuckheads, homophobes, racists, and other assholes like to yell shit before they jump you, if that’s their game. But there are nuances. The odds of imminent violence go down if the word “cunt” is spoken by an Englishman. On the flip side, if a Canadian twice the size of an average NHL player calls you a “goof” in a bar, you better head for the nearest exit.

Here, then, is our guide to the world’s curse words, sex words, and you-better-run words, with an emphasis on the greatest of them all, the f-word.

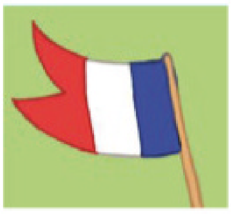
MEXICAN SPANISH

You may be familiar with the verb *chingar.* It might seem like a pretty literal cognate to the English verb "fuck," with all its offshoots. You can't get much closer to being a fucker than being *un chingón.* Except in English, sometimes the word "fucker" can express admiration or affection. Like when we say, "He's such a funny fucker!" Or, "Are you kidding? I love the fucker!" This approving sense is completely absent in *chinga.*

Etymologically, *chingar* means "to rip apart." Octavio Paz attributes the word's implicit violence to the Spanish conquistadors who *chingado*'d—fucked—the Aztec Empire right down the middle. This makes Hernán Cortés the original *chingón,* but remember, for every fucker there has to be a fuckee. It's simple physics.

In the case of Cortés, his *chingada*—that which he fucked—wasn't just the social fabric of indigenous Mexico. He also literally fucked his native guide and interpreter, Malintzin, aka Doña Marina, leaving her pregnant with the first mestizo child in history, and leaving the mixed-race children to come with the mother of all mommy issues. Traditional nicknames for Malintzin include *La Malinche*—roughly the Mexican equivalent of Benedict Arnold—*La Llorona,* the weeping wife, and, easy enough, *La Chingada*. So if you've ever wondered why some Mexicans get so worked up over the casual suggestion that they *chinga* their *madre,* maybe it's because their ancestral *madre* got about as fucked as you can get.

FRENCH



The French, go figure, have a ludicrous number of expressions for fucking—more words for the act than sexual positions detailed in the Kama Sutra and practiced at Kink.com's legendary Armory porn studio combined. They also have a variety of excellent fuck-yous, from the plosively straightforward *baise-toi* to the concise *t'encul,* which makes the five syllables of "fuck your own ass out" seem like sputtering overkill.

That said, in a culture this nakedly libidinous, insulting someone by referencing fornication doesn't pack quite the same punch as it does in the U.S., where the "U" might as well stand for "unlaid." Consequently, to really get a French person's dander up, you've got to take the reverse tack. Try calling them *mal baisé* and see how long it takes the wine glass in their hand to connect with your skull.

Thanks to the wonderfully polysemous nature of French, with its words carrying so many meanings, when you hurl *mal baisé* at someone, you're not only saying they're "poorly fucked," you're also implying they're terrible at fucking or haven't ever been fucked at all! In a city like Paris, it's the ultimate indignity. *Sacre bleu!*

FRENCH CANADIAN

When France surrendered Canada to England in the 1760s after a war and treaty, it forked Gallic culture in two very different directions.

While the European French underwent centuries of political revolution and social upheaval, their tongues and morals loosening along the way, Québec played relatively nice and let the Catholic Church run the show until the middle of last century. The result is a weird, horny little province where nudity is a regular part of breakfast (google "serveuse sexy") and B&Bs leave books by the Marquis de Sade on the nightstands, but where the most potent word you can say derives from "tabernacle." That's the box in a Catholic church where they keep the communion wafers. *Tabernak*—French Canadian slang for "fuck"—is used to express immense excitement (akin to "Fucking awesome!") or when a resident of the province smashes their thumb with a hammer. *Tabernak! Tabernak! Tabernak!*

Incidentally, two other big curse words are *hostie* (the wafers themselves) and *calisse* (the chalice you drink communion wine out of). These words are not only fully interchangeable, you can also cram them all together to make a triple-swear. *Ah, calisse d'hostie de tabernak!* It's the holy trinity of cussin'.

REGULAR CANADIAN

These guys say "fuck" the same way we do, but boy, do they say it a lot. Half the time it's not even really a word, but simply a sound they make to fill in speech gaps, like Americans might say "um" or "like." If you really wanna get a Canuck's goat, the best way is to disparage their work ethic. The insult "dog fucker" originated as a reference to someone so lazy they can't even be bothered to find another human to have sex with, and so look to canines. While laziness is common around the world, proud Canadians *really* don't like being called on it.

You can also call them a "goof"—the verbal equivalent of dropping an atomic bomb—to emphasize your Canadian target's slacker ways. Maybe throw "Canuck" in there for added impact. For some reason it still bums a lot of them out.

ITALIAN

You know your culture might be a little on the religious side when you let the Pope have his own country inside your country. Ditto when you can watch reality TV stars screw on prime-time television, but then get kicked off the air for blaspheming the Lord.

If you've spent enough time around Italians, you've probably heard all manner of colorful signifiers for copulation and the anatomical components involved.

It's entirely possible, however, your ears have never been blessed with the king-mother-god-emperor of Italian swears.

It's a two-word phrase so heavy, so laden with fury, that even Italians who regularly exclaim *pota di Christo* ("Christ's cunt") or *cazzo Maria* ("Mary's dick") would hesitate to let it pass through their lips.

You ready for it?

Porco dio. That's it. "Pig god." I used to think the *porco* in *porco dio* worked the way we sometimes say "porking" to mean "fucking." Like, "No way, that dude porked Bethany?!" THAT at least made sense. I mean, sure, "fuck god" is a pretty extreme sentiment. But *porco* does not equal "pork," not as a verb for "fucking," not even as a noun. When an Italian yells *"Porco dio!"* the meaning is literal. "Pig god!"

Totally separate point: Did you know Ani DiFranco is Italian for "Frank's anus"?

CHINESE

Say *tso,* like General Tso, but a little crisper on the "T," like halfway to "ch." Good, you just said "fuck" in Chinese. Now try *tso ni*. That's "fuck you." And finally, give me a *tso ni ma*. Very nice. NEVER say that with a Chinese person within earshot. It's the Mandarin equivalent of saying, "Fuck your mom."

Mainland Chinese culture is about as coarse as contemporary civilization gets. Be it the back-to-back-to-back trauma of the civil wars, the Japanese occupation, the Communist Revolution, and Mao's Great Leap Forward, or just an inherent consequence of thrusting a billion people from farming to superpowerdom in less than half a century, even the most sophisticated urban dwellers of the freeishwheeling New China have some pretty rough edges.

If you keep your ears open at fancy government functions, you'll hear the word *shah-bih* ("stupid cunt") continuously muttered by everyone, from party ministers to the janitor.

Likewise, if you go to a punk rock show, prepare to have *NU-BIH!* shouted at you from all angles. In practice, it's the equivalent of yelling "Fuck yeah!" But if you punch it into Google Translate, you get "cow vagina." How agrarian is that?

ARABIC

God love a society where you can pick a fight by calling someone a shoe. "Hey! You're a shoe!" *BLAM.* Seriously, though, don't go calling folks "shoes" in the Middle East. Nor dogs, donkeys, or sons of these animals. They've already got enough on their regional plate without having to deal with your sass-mouth. That said, if somebody's giving you a hard time, and you happen to be in the Fertile Crescent, a brisk, exasperated بعبوس (pronounced "baaboos") should make your feelings about the situation pretty plain. Its literal meaning strays a bit from conventional notions of fucking, and is a lot closer to "get your finger out of my asshole," but it nicely nails the spirit of being fucked with.

RUSSIAN

Cursing in Russian could be its own article. Hell, its own book. Hell, it *is* a book. Punk ethnographer Alexei Plutser-Sarno, part of the same Moscow art collective that gave us Pussy Riot, has been assembling a multivolume dictionary of *mat* for the past 15 years. *Mat*–pronounced "maht"–is Russian for "obscene language." It derives from the Russian word for "mother," as in "Go fuck your mother." Real nice, Russia.

This mother tongue is so extensive, the first volume of Plutser-Sarno's dictionary runs over a thousand entries and consists solely of expressions using the Russian word for "cock," *хуй* (pronounced "kwee"). So far he's published three volumes of a projected 12: volume two's all "pussy" (*пиздá* /"pizda"), while three is for "fuck" (*ебáть* /"yebát"). He's currently working on the next two volumes: four will continue his "fuck" work, while five focuses on "fucked."

That's right. The Russian f-word needs an entire dictionary for a single participle. Bear this in mind before you set out to get your ass kicked in the Russian Federation. If you think you're getting under someone's skin by calling their mom a *сук* /"suk" ("bitch") or a *блядь* /"blyad" ("whore"), you need to know you're in a whole separate league from people who regularly drop the word *сукблядь* /"sukblyad" ("bitchwhore") in casual conversation and who are so far past telling you to go "fuck your mom" that they now just say, "Go to your fucked mother" (*иди к ебаный мать* /"idi ka'ebenyi mat"). Besides, *блядь* /"blyad" has become so commonplace in Russian speech, it's turned into a conversational hesitation tool like "um" or "uh," or a Canadian's use of "fuck."

Muscovites and their fellow Russians will probably just assume you have a very slow stammer.

EVERY OTHER LANGUAGE

Here's the thing. No matter where you are on this great planet, if you really want to say the word "fuck" and have locals instantly understand you, just say "fuck." No translation needed. Hip-hop, Hollywood movies, and the internet have done the heavy lifting for you. For all the lame aspects that have followed globalization and Western cultural hegemony (example: Bangkok is home to the world's second-largest Starbucks), it's helpful to remember that at no other point in human history has it been as easy for an American to be an asshole wherever he or she wants.

Thomas Morton is a writer, documentary-maker, and the creator of the TV series "Balls Deep." He has learned to swear in the vernacular of 42 different countries, although a lot of them tend to run together.

MAY PET OF THE MONTH

EMMA HIX

PHOTOGRAPHY
MS. SANDS

THOUGH our May Penthouse Pet of the Month was born in the Great White North, she looks like your typical California girl, with her sun-kissed skin and blonde bob. Emma Hix made her way into the adult industry after she broke up with her first boyfriend and found herself drowning her sorrows by watching Dani Daniels porn online. “She was having so much fun filming her scenes,” Emma remembers. “It was like her personality came through the screen.” The stunner slid into the DMs of one of Dani’s costars, packed a bag, headed to the City of Angels, and the rest is history.

Age: 22 years old
Measurements: 32C-24-32
Hometown: Kelowna, British Columbia
Instagram: @EmmaHixOfficial

On the best sexual experience she’s ever had…
It was morning sex. It was remarkable because we loved each other so much that we didn’t care about our morning breath, or anything. We just wanted to please each other. I’ll never forget how hard I came and how many times. Something as simple as morning sex is all I need.

On what she does in her spare time…
I love to clean, cook, play piano, hike, talk to my fans, and Netflix ’n’ chill.

On her favorite foods…
Pizza, sushi, mac and cheese, Capri Sun, Oreos, Cheetos—wow, this answer is making me realize how unhealthy I am!

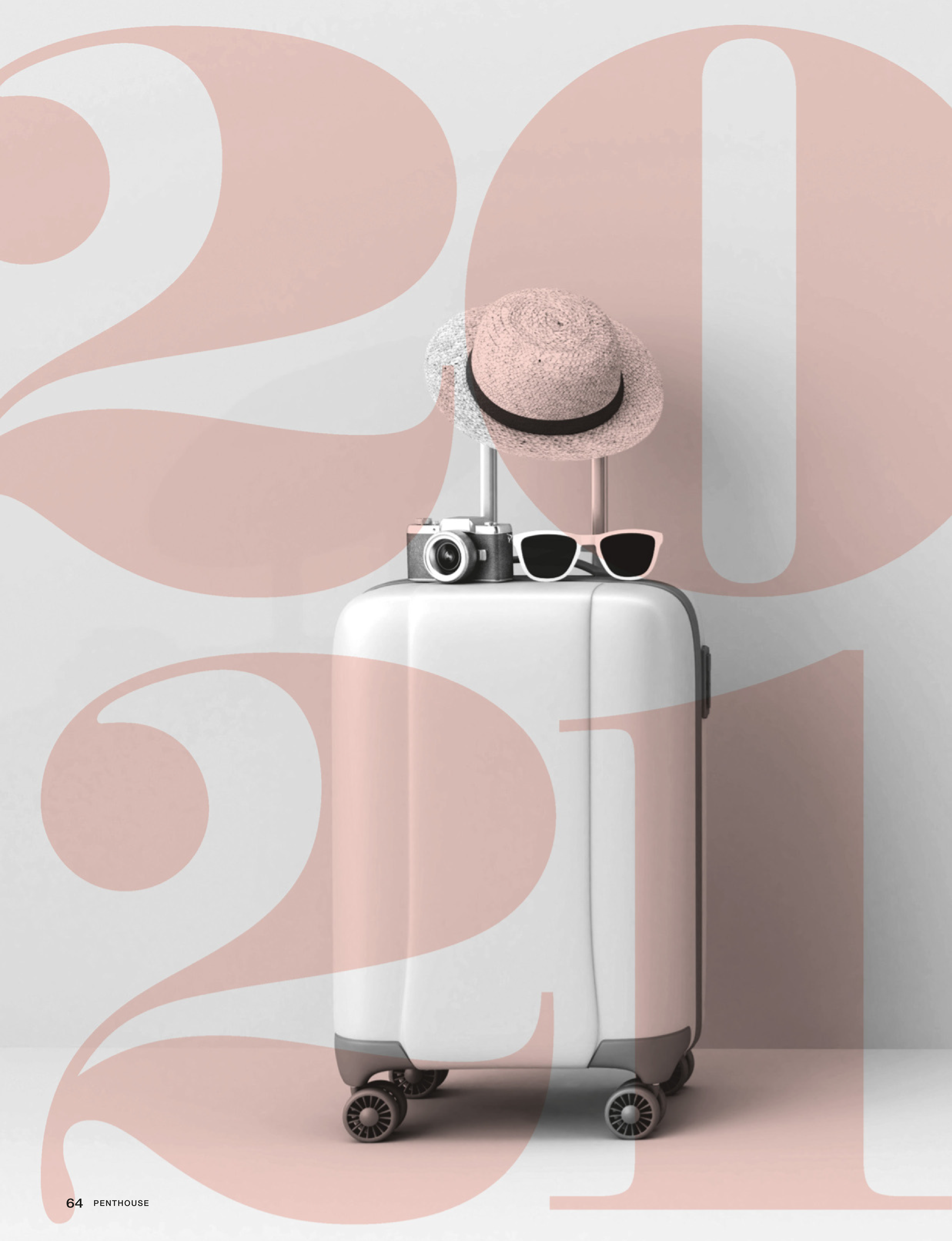
On her pet peeves…
People who eat with their mouths open, people who talk super loud in airports, people who suck at driving, and people who spell my last name wrong. It’s Hix, not Hicks!

On her ultimate fantasy…
Getting fucked by a cop, or gang-banged by a boyfriend and a crew of his best friends.

On the most orgasms she’s had in a day…
It was 22. I remember because I counted, and I was proud.

On the most daring thing she has ever done…
I jumped off a 50-foot cliff into a lake, which was terrifying. Back in Canada, I had sex with a guy on the back of a boat in midday while he was driving, and yes, we fell off together. Just another day in Canada!

On her perfect man…
I love dorky guys who have a bit of confidence. I need a man who is in touch with his emotions and isn’t afraid to show that side of himself. I like bigger guys—you know, the soft, teddy bear types. I’m clumsy and nerdy myself, so I need a guy who will laugh with me.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ADVENTURE CALLS

WHEN THE CORONAVIRUS NIGHTMARE FINALLY ENDS, WE'LL BE MORE THAN READY TO HIT THE ROAD OR VISIT A FOREIGN LAND. HERE ARE SOME OF OUR HOT TRAVEL TIPS, GREAT TRAILS TO HIKE, PLACES TO TEST YOUR WILDERNESS SKILLS, AND MORE.

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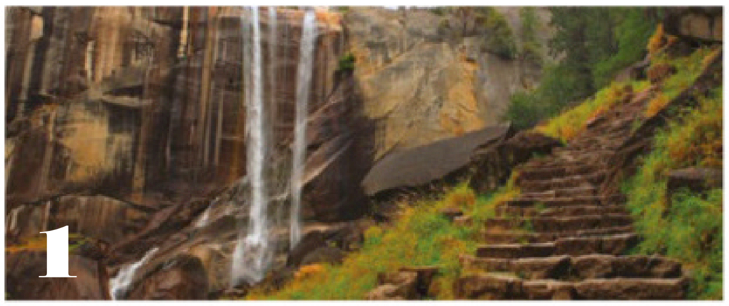
21

PHOTO: AANBETTA / SHUTTERSTOCKIMAGES

GREAT AMERICAN HIKING TRAILS

EVERYONE KNOWS PELOTON'S PRICEY TREADMILL WITH ITS CYBER-SIMULATION OF A HIKE IS ONE OF THIS CENTURY'S DUMBEST INVENTIONS. NATURE IS ALL AROUND US, AND IT'S BY FAR THE BEST THING FOR YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH. SO WHY NOT GET OUT THERE? HERE ARE FIVE TRAILS READY TO REWARD EVERY STEP YOU TAKE WITH PHENOMENAL BEAUTY.



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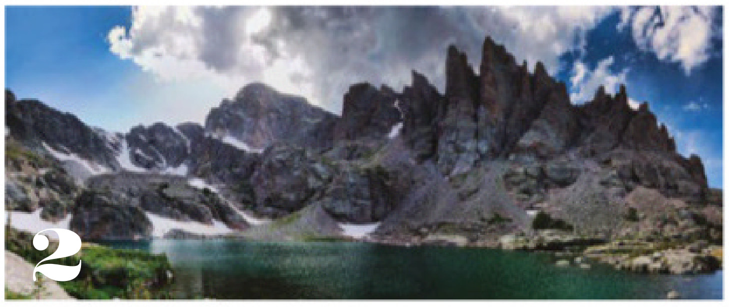

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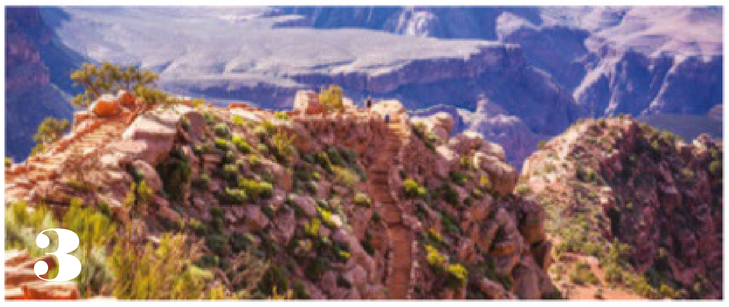

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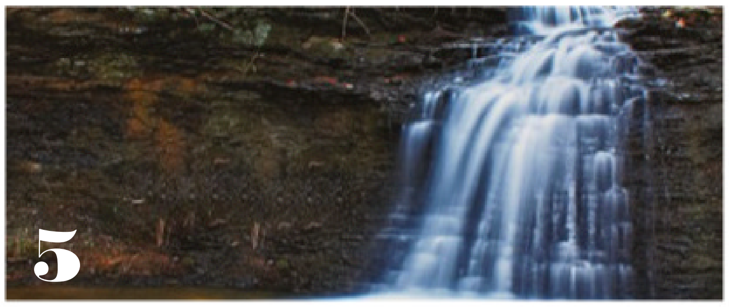

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1. Panorama Trail, Yosemite National Park, California

8.5 miles

Level: Difficult

The Panorama is an all-day affair for avid hikers, and challenging enough to include a car or bus ride so you don't add five miles to this beast. But trust us, it's a stunner. You'll be amazed by the mist from waterfalls and gorgeous valley views. There's a reason this hike is so popular. Why not see it with your own eyes?

2. Sky Pond and Lake of Glass, Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado

9 miles (round-trip)

Level: Moderate to difficult

Here's a hike where the high points—the Loch, Lake of Glass, Sky Pond, and Timberline Falls—make you feel like you're high on mushrooms and wandering through FernGully. Though some parts of the trail are steep, demanding, and possibly slippery, the rewards are bountiful.

3. Bright Angel Trail, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

16 miles (round-trip)

Level: Very difficult

The Bright Angel is one of the most glorious trails you could ever attempt, but its steepness on the way back up from the Colorado River to the South Rim means you need to be in shape and be smart about pacing yourself. People who plan to do this hike in one day start early and pack carb-dense foods to keep their energy up. But most opt for an overnight trip to give themselves time to explore and take breaks. The trail begins and ends with four-plus miles of switchbacks—a grueling thigh-punisher as you head for the finish line. Bright Angel will kick your ass, but you'll be rewarded by insane Grand Canyon views. And word to the wise: Stretch your legs at the end of the day or you'll be seriously hurting afterward.

4. Grinnell Glacier Trail, Glacier National Park, Montana

11.3 miles

Level: Easy

If you've never been to sprawling, magnificent Montana, do yourself a favor and get there ASAP. Glacier National Park is a wonderland of lush greenery, sparkling lakes, and snowcapped mountains. This 11-mile hike is yours to explore from July through September, when it's not buried in snow. Put Glacier on your summer bucket list. You won't be disappointed.

5. Alum Hollow Trail, Green Mountain Nature Preserve, Alabama

2.2 miles

Level: Easy

Alum Hollow can be walked in an hour, but that hour will mesmerize you. Relatively unknown, this Alabama gem offers one showstopping wilderness moment after another. Hit the trail in the spring or fall and you'll enter a misty, enchanted forest filled with enormous, spooky trees and a rushing waterfall.

KEEPING HEALTHY IN FOREIGN LANDS

1. HOLD THE ICE
There are many countries where the water is dirtier than a ditch in Los Angeles, and our soft American constitutions just can't hack it. In fact, drinking contaminated water can cause serious damage from infections. Skip the ice in countries where the water is questionable. Avoid blended drinks. We know a girl who spent a week in a Mexican hospital because of ice. Don't be that girl.

2. USE A STERIPEN
Carting around the SteriPEN Ultra USB-rechargeable water filter may make you feel more paranoid than the world's biggest germophobe, but you won't regret it. Again, this is all about clean water, so whether you're camping in Baja California or backpacking around Asia and filling up from the tap, you'll want to make sure your water isn't tainted.

3. MYRRH
This ancient herb extracted from thorny northeastern African trees may look dank and nasty, but it kills harmful bacteria, parasites, and mold, supports oral health, and even helps with pain and inflammation. Drop some concentrated myrrh into your favorite oil and apply topically to fend off germs and reduce swelling.

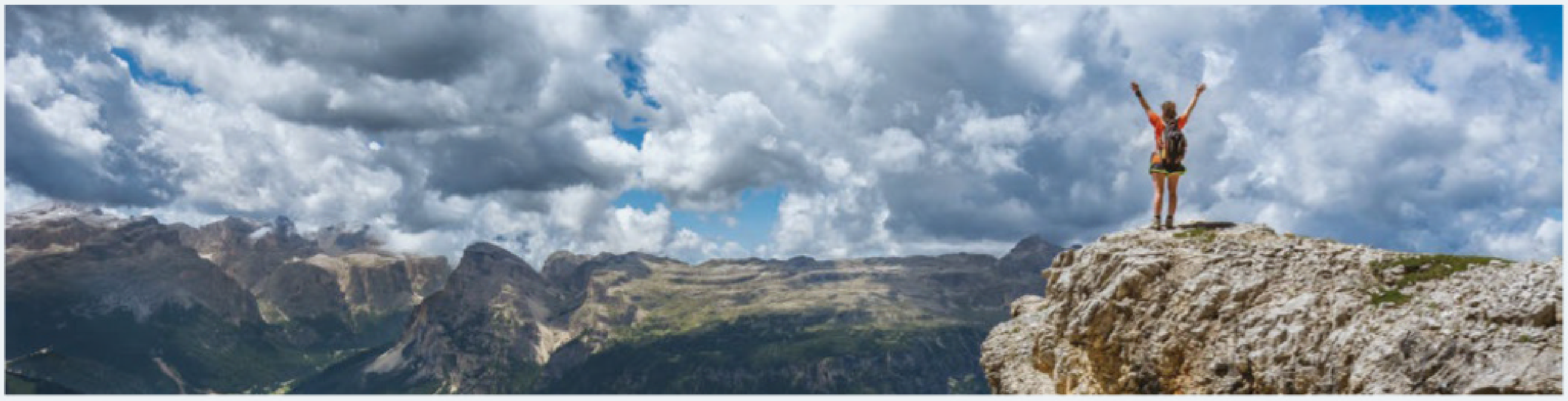
4. ISOPROPYL ALCOHOL
Want to kill germs with the lethal force of an AR-15? Mix one cup of 91 percent isopropyl alcohol to ¼ cup of Aloe vera in whatever vessel you chose, and you'll have the best sterilization option going. You can also fill a ziplock bag with one cup of isopropyl alcohol to every three cups of water to create a makeshift gel ice pack, great for soothing the swelling of injuries on the go.

5. ONLY EAT STREET FOOD AT HIGH-TURNOVER PLACES
This seems obvious, but when eating street food, you don't want anything sitting around. Make sure it's prepared in front of your own eyes, and remember that the longer the line of customers, the higher the turnover, the fresher the product.

6. BRING ZINC AND OIL OF OREGANO
Both of these are affordable and can keep you healthy on your trip. Feel a cough coming on? Power down some zinc and a few drops of concentrated oil of oregano. It tastes like shit, but it works.

PHOTOS: PHOTOFEST; SHUTTERSTOCK

WHERE THE NAME OF THE GAME IS SURVIVAL



Enter a pamper-free zone by choosing a survival-skills boot camp or wilderness challenge for your next trip. The fun—if that's the right word—involves pushing your limits, connecting deeply to nature, tapping into primal circuits, and learning cool shit. You'll build a shelter, forage, navigate without instruments, fish with a spear you carved. Plus, *Survivor*-style adventuring will give you a leg up should you ever encounter a natural disaster, backcountry mishap, or postapocalyptic wasteland. Here are places to channel your inner Bear Grylls, and build muscle memory that just might save your ass someday.

THOMAS COYNE SURVIVAL SCHOOLS
californiasurvivaltraining.com
Founded by a guy with a ton of experience in dire situations (Coyne trained in search and rescue, rappelling from helicopters, firefighting, swift water rescue, confined space rescue, HAZMAT operations, emergency medicine, and more), this California-based outdoor school with several locations has been the training center of choice for U.S. Air Force Special Operations, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare instructors, U.S. Navy helicopter rescue, and other groups that encounter life-or-death scenarios. For their weekend field course, Coyne instructors send you into a mountain wilderness without food, water, or sleeping bag.

PATRIOT SURVIVAL SCHOOLS
patriotsurvivalschool.com
Based in rural North Texas, Patriot offers a 40-hour foundational week called Bug-Out Boot Camp where its elite instructors, all former U.S. Army Rangers and Special Forces operatives, teach you how to build fires, trap game, purify water, identify edible plants, and more. Plus, you learn the basics of SERE (survival, evasion, resistance, escape), which means you'll not only be able to keep clear of the walking dead but also the grim foot soldiers of any future dystopian regime.

BOULDER OUTDOOR SURVIVAL SCHOOL
boss-inc.com
The world's oldest and largest survival school, BOSS, as it's known, launched in southern Utah canyonland in 1968. It offers campers seven-day, 14-day, and monthlong field courses that teach what BOSS calls "traditional living skills." Drawing on the ancient wisdom of indigenous peoples (among them, Pueblo, Navajo, and Fremont Indians), instructors will have you flint knapping, creating cordage from plants, tanning hides, and identifying superior campsites. You'll journey through rugged canyon and mountain environments with just a blanket, poncho, and knife.

ANCIENT PATHWAYS
apathways.com
This Flagstaff, Arizona-based survival mainstay was where Emile Hirsch trained for his role in *Into the Wild,* a 2007 movie chronicling a young man's attempt to live off the land deep in the Alaskan bush. Hirsch took the three-day Knife-Only course, which meant he learned food procurement, tracking skills, wilderness first-aid, and more, while sleeping in a shelter he built. The survival and bushcraft courses last up to ten days and prepare you to face numerous outdoor challenges.

APPALACHIAN BUSHMAN SCHOOL
coalcrackerbushcraft.com
Easterners have their own supply of survival schools and camps, with good ones in Maine, New Jersey, and Virginia. They're joined by this one, in eastern Pennsylvania's Appalachian Mountains. The five-day Bushman Course teaches you wilderness self-reliance skills. You'll even learn how to build a permanent shelter with a forest ax, should you want to live like a hermit or erect a DIY hunting cabin someday. The three-day Advanced Survival course prepares men and women to weather short-term survival situations. If you want to master techniques practiced by the pioneers, this is your place.

BEAR GRYLLS SURVIVAL ACADEMY
beargryllssurvivalacademy.com
Yup, the very face of survival training, a former British Special Forces soldier best known for TV shows like *Man vs. Wild* and *Running Wild,* Bear Grylls founded his own academy in Scotland in 2012. He soon added a second location in the Catskills, 120 miles north of New York City. Scottish offerings include the five-day Survive the Highlands course, and Survive the Moors, a three-day option. In a five-day Catskills course, instructors selected by Grylls share his survivalist secrets before sending you on a 36-hour solo adventure, equipped with just a few basics and an empty canteen. Your mission? Navigate dense mountain forest–and a waterfall–until you reach safety.

HOW TO GET YOUR WAY WHEN TRAVELING

(Hint: Yelling is not the answer.)

FOR YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE, HERE ARE SEVEN TIPS BY ELITE NEGOTIATORS AND TRAVEL GURUS TO HELP YOU WALK AWAY FEELING LIKE A WINNER, NOT A PISSED-OFF LOSER, WHEN YOU REQUEST SOMETHING FROM AN AIRLINE REP OR HOTEL CLERK.

We've all seen that person at the airline check-in counter, making a scene, oblivious to the eyerolls of fellow travelers and the growing line at their back as they raise their voice and gesticulate aggressively.

What do experts call this behavior? Counterproductive. (Not to mention bad for your blood pressure.)

Take a different approach, say the pros. Consider what Chris Voss, former top FBI hostage negotiator, advises. Author of *Never Split the Difference,* a guy currently sharing negotiation secrets online at MasterClass, he used the word "playful" three times in a recent *New York Times* Q&A. A playful tone when seeking something from an airline, hotel, or car-rental representative increases your odds of success. Needless to say, if you feel shafted, keeping your cool is hard, but Voss says being calm and strategic is the way to go.

1. Be friendly, not ferocious

Your voice, posture, and words should project friendliness. Voss says try to convey this to the clerk: "I like you and want you to enjoy this interaction." Put the person in a positive frame of mind. This gives you room to work toward your ask, whether it's an upgrade, a rebooking, or similar goal. Frequent-flyer legend Randy Petersen recommends being "polite and direct." Polite directness is a tricky balance to achieve, but it works. Voss: "Brits say you can be as rude as you want as long as you're polite by it."

2. Magic words

Randy Petersen says don't underestimate the power of "please" and "thank you." He's learned how to thank people in dozens of languages. Chris Voss says a well-timed "I'm sorry" makes an employee feel empowered. He adds this nugget: Frame your ask in a way that allows the employee to say "no," not "yes." This makes the employee feel in control. Here's an example of smart framing: "Would it be totally ridiculous of me to ask whether I could check into my room early without a fee?"

3. Empathy

This is a big one. Voss suggests using language that communicates your understanding of an employee's hassle-filled job. Example: "Hi, I'm another self-centered traveler here to make your life difficult by asking whether there's any chance of an upgrade to a suite at no extra cost."

4. Practice

Entrepreneur, author, and finance expert Ramit Sethi blogs often about negotiating in a work context. But his advice applies to travel, too. Rehearse your lines so you get comfortable with the ask, he advises. Even if it feels a little goofy, keep at it. Maybe hit a farmer's market and haggle for an item, or try out lines on a friend.

5. Appearance

It matters. There's expert consensus on this. That doesn't mean you have to rock designer duds or a fancy power suit. Just opt for something other than flip-flops, basketball shorts, a muscle shirt, and a backward ball cap if you're going to float a gratis upgrade to business class.

6. Do it in person

Let's say you need to change a flight and don't want to get slammed with a big fee. Rather than negotiate on the phone, the pros say do it in person if at all possible. It's harder to say no to someone's face. In addition, don't be shy about mentioning if the trip marks a special occasion, like a honeymoon or anniversary. Be truthful, though. Travel clerks develop impressive bullshit-detectors.

7. Timing

Dropping a complicated request on a counter clerk or gate agent during a hectic time is not a great move. Get the timing right. And here's a micro-tip: If you're angling for a free hotel-room upgrade, sometimes arriving later is better, since by then the hotel has a better idea of available suites.

PHOTOS: PHOTOFEST

JUNE PET OF THE MONTH

JAZMIN LUV

PHOTOGRAPHY
MS. SANDS

OUR June Penthouse Pet of the Month Jazmin Luv is sexy, confident, and super into bondage. What more could you ask for? This raven-haired beauty was born and raised in Las Vegas, which is probably why she's been able to make a career of being adventurous and wild. We're not sure what the future has in store for this fox, but we're happy we got to parade her in our pages while she's on fire.

Age: 20 years old
Measurements: 32C-25-28
Hometown: Las Vegas, Nevada
Instagram: @thejazminluv

On famous women she admires…
I love Rihanna, because she built an entire empire out of her success in music and pop culture. She also includes products for women of all body types, which is super important to me. I also love Kim Kardashian. Who else gets famous from a sex tape and turns herself into the richest, most powerful woman in the world? I think she is a total boss.

On her favorite way to relax…
Sex, duh.

On her favorite fantasy…
I'm a big fan of bondage, so if that's involved, I'll be excited. I love being fucked doggie-style while I'm wearing a leash. I am a big fan of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Who doesn't love a man with an entire sex dungeon?

On her ideal man…
He has to be taller than me with dark hair and a lot of tattoos. I want a man who treats me like a princess on the streets and dominates me in the sheets. Someone who is my best friend but can also get freaky with me every night.

On her best qualities…
I'm a very positive person who is open-minded and can find humor in any situation.

On what she loves about her job…
I've met so many great people. I'm always laughing and having a good time. This job has allowed me to travel to so many places, experience wild things. I love it. But I also still love dancing, which is where I started out, and I try to strip a few nights a week when I have time. Being paid to be naked is a dream.

On what gets her in trouble…
Sometimes I think with my pussy instead of my brain.

Now That We Can’t Touch, What Are We Gonna Do?

PENT UP DURING THE PANDEMIC OF 2020.

BY DOROTHY DARKER

WITH Covid-19 wreaking havoc around the planet, things feel apocalyptic these days, including on the sex and dating fronts. Given the daily deluge of bad news, it’s a welcome development when even the smallest bit of good news appears.

For those of us worried about the transmission of the virus in semen (one of the dangers, you’ll recall, of the AIDS virus), it brought a modicum of relief to learn a recent study by a team of international researchers found a group of Chinese men showed no trace of Covid-19 virus in their semen when examined eight days to three months post-diagnosis.

The relief was short-lived, though, because a subsequent study by a Chinese research team detected the virus in a small subset of 38 infected men. American researchers cautioned against reading too much into this very limited study, however, with the Society for Reproductive Medicine saying the findings are not cause for alarm.

But that’s how it’s been during this crisis: up and down. Shifts in the medical science, weird new symptoms established (Covid toe, anyone?), alterations of epidemiological models—the very definition of a fluid situation, with thousands of lives at stake.

Along with big-picture grimness, there are those stressful hygiene protocols we’re trying to practice so we can avoid our own personal encounter with the “Invisible Enemy.” For the most germ-wary people, opening tricky packages and transferring food from just-bought containers can feel as delicate as defusing a bomb.

Physical distancing. Surface decontamination. Face masks. Sanitizing groceries. The list goes on. Suddenly, many of us are spending hours socializing or conferencing on Zoom at home, re-binge-watching cable shows, and checking out TikTok influencers.

You can’t hook up from six feet away. And the fact that people can be infectious without showing symptoms just adds to the risk of bodily contact with another. To make matters worse, the bars, coffee shops, restaurants, and clubs where we used to be able to meet someone new or take someone on a date might be closed, out of business, or operating with limited hours, smaller patron numbers, and physical distancing inside.

So what are our options when it comes to sex and romance during Covid-19?

We checked in with retired porn star Brittany Andrews, an AVN Hall of Famer, dancer, dominatrix, and an all-around glamorous blonde with a wealth of sex expertise.

“I’ve always been a safe-sex person,” Andrews tells *Penthouse* via the safety of Skype. “I was one of the longest-running condoms-only performers. And one of my favorite fetishes, being a natural-born germaphobe, was always foot-fetish stuff. A lot of that is pretty safe—I just show you my toes and feet. I think with this Covid-19 thing, sex will be activities that aren’t as intimate, and that don’t include a lot of saliva.”

Of course our new pandemic-altered reality comes at a time when hooking up was already pretty complicated, given our culture’s changed rules of sexual etiquette.

“Even before Covid-19,” Andrews points out, “we had the #MeToo movement. I feel like that made it difficult for men, in person, to hit on a girl. I think the way human beings connect today is a lot different from when you and I were younger.”

Though dating technology has moved a lot of the business of meeting and flirting online, Tinder and other apps are not to everyone’s taste, Andrews says.

“I have frequent conversations about sex and dating,” says the sex-industry veteran, “and there are still a lot of people who don’t believe in hooking up using apps. They prefer meeting people out in the world and seeing if there’s any chemistry in person.”

Needless to say, there aren’t a lot of hookups and romances kindling in public places mid-pandemic. So those who prefer to look for sex and love in non-digital ways may finally find themselves shifting to a greater reliance on phone and computer screens.

But this crisis is bringing change to everyone’s life, including those who live and love most digitally. The global upheaval will have multiple social and cultural repercussions. And with regard to sex and dating, the shockwaves may impact certain groups more intensely than others. Those who were the most sexually active pre-pandemic might be one group. Another might be people who are generally more anxious about germs and disease, whether or not coronavirus is raging.

People who adapt quickly to this uncharted world will help set the new trends and identify opportunities. And while scientists search for a vaccine, we can anticipate that in this high-risk period, fantasy, fetish, and flirting will assume larger roles.

By necessity, our sexual behavior will become even more visually oriented—a change well underway. In April, for example, the *New York Times* ran a piece on the sharp rise in people sending nude selfies to each other. The reporter interviewed a couple of guys who were receiving nude selfies from multiple people. A young woman in the article suggested delivering a little pleasure to someone via nude pictures of herself was, in a sense, one way she could do her part to help others get through this tough time.

Brittany Andrews reminds us that even during a pandemic, the human sex drive can’t be stopped. Consequently, there will be a broad range of sexual responses and behaviors manifested.

“People are horny and some are going to fuck, no matter what,”

PHOTO: DMITRI MA / SHUTTERSTOCK

Brittany Andrews

Andrews says. Then with a chuckle, she adds, "There are a lot of guys out there who will be like, 'I'll get some Covid-19 to bust a nut.' We all know it."

Interest in medical fetish gear has gotten a bump, according to Andrews. (A shrink might say that's a way of sublimating or taming the anxiety we have about medical matters these days—sexualizing what's scary). Fantasy scenarios involving face and full-head latex masks, latex gloves and aprons, and even more extreme applications like full rubber "gimp" regalia are having their day.

"It's all about the memes of the gimp outfit at the grocery store," Andrews says, laughing. "I mean, if we're gonna do it, let's just go there. I've been seeing a lot of my girlfriends capitalizing on the latex masks."

Natalie Mars and her girlfriend Mistress Damazonia—one of Andrews' favorite porn couples—have been exploring more medical fetishes. "I love them so much!" says Andrews. "Natalie won best trans performer for both AVN and Pornhub Awards. Her girlfriend has been playing the latex nurse with the mask and gloves and it's so fucking hot."

Miley Cyrus, Nicki Minaj, and the Kardashian Kult are all fans of latex fashions. Can it be long before Miley is posing in an N95 mask and matching monokini? Will we see PPE streetwear designs from Kanye West's clothing company? And don't be surprised if full-face shields, disposable industrial HAZMAT coveralls, balaclavas, opera gloves, and goggles are all featured on Fall Fashion Week's runways. (Though whether any celebrities will be spectating in-person remains to be seen.)

"The other day," says Andrews, "I picked up stuff from a girl I know who makes designer face masks. I've now got a Chanel one and a Louis Vuitton one, so it's become its own fashion statement—like medical fetish goes mainstream."

Along with this shift to online visual communication via Zoom, Skype, and FaceTime, and the surge in sex-industry cam sites and platforms like OnlyFans, brick-and-mortar adult retailers and their customers are also capitalizing on online modes of commerce.

One such retailer is Chi Chi LaRue's Circus, located in West Hollywood, a store which had the rotten luck of opening for business just a few weeks before the pandemic hit.

Formerly called Circus of Books, this landmark location on Santa Monica Boulevard was the area's first LGBT adult store. Such was its iconic status, the store is now the subject of a new, critically acclaimed Netflix documentary, *Circus of Books*. The film was directed by artist Rachel Mason, daughter of longtime owners Barry and Karen Mason.

Rob Novinger, CEO of the store's parent company, Channel 1 Releasing, told *Penthouse* there's been a spike in online ordering from the retailer's digital storefront.

"For us, the surge certainly doesn't replace the volume from our physical stores, but I'm not complaining," Novinger says. "What I have noticed is people are really stocking up on the basics—just like people are doing with toilet paper. Lube, cock rings, dongs—BIG dongs. I think people must be utilizing their time at home for anal challenges."

Novinger also notes a jump in local online orders from regulars who before shopped in-person.

When this Chi Chi LaRue's Circus location does open its doors again, visitors are in for a treat, with all the erotic art, stylish Instagramable interiors, pink and orange color schemes, elaborate role-play costume and fashion items, aisle of lubricants, coffee-table books, and more.

But until that day comes, online is the way to go. And any product that can liven up staying at home is to be appreciated.

"Time for more self-love!" Novinger says with a smile. Then he adds, "I think that explains the surge in vibes, lube, and dongs. It's a super strange time, but I think it's pushing people to discover new things that maybe weren't part of their normal routine."

As for Andrews, "safer at home" in Las Vegas, she agrees that self-pleasuring is no doubt on the increase. "I'm going to assume a lot of people aren't getting laid right now," she observes. "If you're single, I would think getting laid would be difficult."

Elaborating, she adds, "I think people are going to be coming up with new ways to masturbate. With the whole camming thing, there are hi-tech devices where the other person can control your experience by using an app on their phone. I think there's going to be more stuff like that—so you can participate with the other person.

"Before this whole thing began, I wasn't really used to jumping on my computer and having whole conversations with people," Andrews says. "I would schedule a Skype meeting every once in a while—but this is my third one today. I think this kind of communication is going to become more a part of everyday life moving forward."

Dorothy Darker is only too happy to wear a face mask and keep a six-foot distance while riding out the pandemic in Los Angeles. She loves her dog and binge-watching Japanese cooking shows.

PHOTO: AS INC / SHUTTERSTOCK

Sex Expert: Creativity Is Key

Los Angeles-based clinical sexologist Stephanie Hunter Jones, PhD, counsels clients who are negotiating new ways to hygienically hook up and feel sexy virtually.

"I think people are going to have to get very creative," she says, "and that could be a good thing."

Staying sexual during Covid-19? Here are four more observations from Hunter Jones:

Social distancing will take some getting used to.
"Clients I help to open up sexually and explore sexual experiences, they're having a difficult time because they've had to tone that down. Some are limiting to one or two partners."

Virtual reality is the new reality.
About half of Hunter Jones's coupled clients are swingers. "They're doing things virtually, to be as safe as possible. Zoom found out about it and they're trying to crack down, so there are independent servers popping up to host new platforms."

Singles might enjoy "no-touch" games.
"You can have conversations, enjoy a glass of wine, and get to know each other online because that's the reality of what we're living with right now. When it comes to meeting in public, yes, we have to wear masks, but you can use it flirtatiously. Maybe reveal your face a little at a time."

Sexiness is healthy.
Feeling good helps support mental health and the immune system. "Sex is just one aspect of our sexuality. Sexuality is an essence of energy that lives within us. I've been working with clients during this time to get in touch with that essence—that passion."

CYBERCUTIE

WILD CHILD

PHOTOGRAPHY
NULVER MONTES

MODEL
CAROLYNE MONROE

Find more of Carolyne at flirt4free.com/carolyne-monroe/about

PETER COULSON

AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHER PETER COULSON DIDN'T ENTER THE COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHY WORLD UNTIL HIS THIRTIES. BUT ONCE HE DID, HE THRIVED. FOR TWO-PLUS DECADES, COULSON HAS BEEN BLOWING MINDS WITH DRAMATIC PHOTOGRAPHS THAT TOE THE LINE BETWEEN FASHION AND EROTICA.

INSTAGRAM: @PETERCOULSON • WEBSITE: PETER-COULSON.COM.AU

What got you into photography?
My first experience was when I borrowed my dad's Minolta to shoot a Chuck Berry gig. Initially, I was photographing musicians and bands on the side. My passion grew over time. I just wanted to create. I needed a way to express myself. I can't sing or paint, but photography I could do. I shot hobby stuff until I was about 30, then I started to earn money with fashion and advertising photography. I went from shooting lifestyle to working commercially.

When was your first big break?
My fly-fishing business needed photography for advertising, so I shot the ads, and that was where I started working commercially. A magazine we advertised in loved my work, so they approached me and wanted me to shoot for them in the style I was shooting, and it all evolved from there. I was making good money in fishing and lifestyle advertising, but I made the transition to fashion and people because I was enjoying creating, rather than capturing what was happening.

After one fashion shoot, I was addicted. Like anybody, I started off photographing everything, from babies to real estate, corporate headshots, any work that would pay my bills. As I got better, I was able to focus on clients I actually wanted to shoot for, allowing me to drop work I didn't enjoy.

What influenced your dark, dramatic style?
I used to turn a photo black and white to see if it "popped," and if it did, it meant the picture was working in color. When I edit, I also put a black-and-white layer on to be able to see the imperfections better, then I turn it off. Most of my favorite photographers also predominantly shoot or shot in black and white, like Helmut Newton, Peter Lindbergh, and Patrick Demarchelier. To me, black and white is like a painting or other work of visual art in that it isn't something we see every day, like how we view the world in color. It's something being created.

I also really like that it frees up your senses. You see luminosity and the character behind the picture rather than being confused by the colors. In addition, color dates pictures—black and white never dates. I also love the feel of large-format film, which when processed always has a halo from dodging and burning. This is where I got the signature halo I use in a lot of my personal work.

What are your go-to tools for a perfect shoot?
Natural light, and a natural model with emotive eyes.

What's your approach with models?
At the start of every shoot, I get the model to go through a folder of about 5,000 inspiration photos I've gathered over the years and put ones they like into another folder. That gives me an idea of the style they like, and how they would like to be shot. The models are instantly relaxed because they get to pick what we are doing. I try to hide and disappear behind the camera to get the model to let go and live in a fantasy world where I'm not even there and they're taking on whatever emotion we are trying to get into the shot. I talk a lot, but I try to make my voice just a background noise, so they don't literally hear the words I'm saying, but they hear the excitement in my voice, so they can react.

I really stress that it is all about emotion, and every single frame should have a thought. I often ask a model as I'm shooting, "Who are you looking at?" It's a reminder to them that the camera shouldn't be a camera. The camera they're looking at can be their best friend, their lover, their enemy, even their dog.

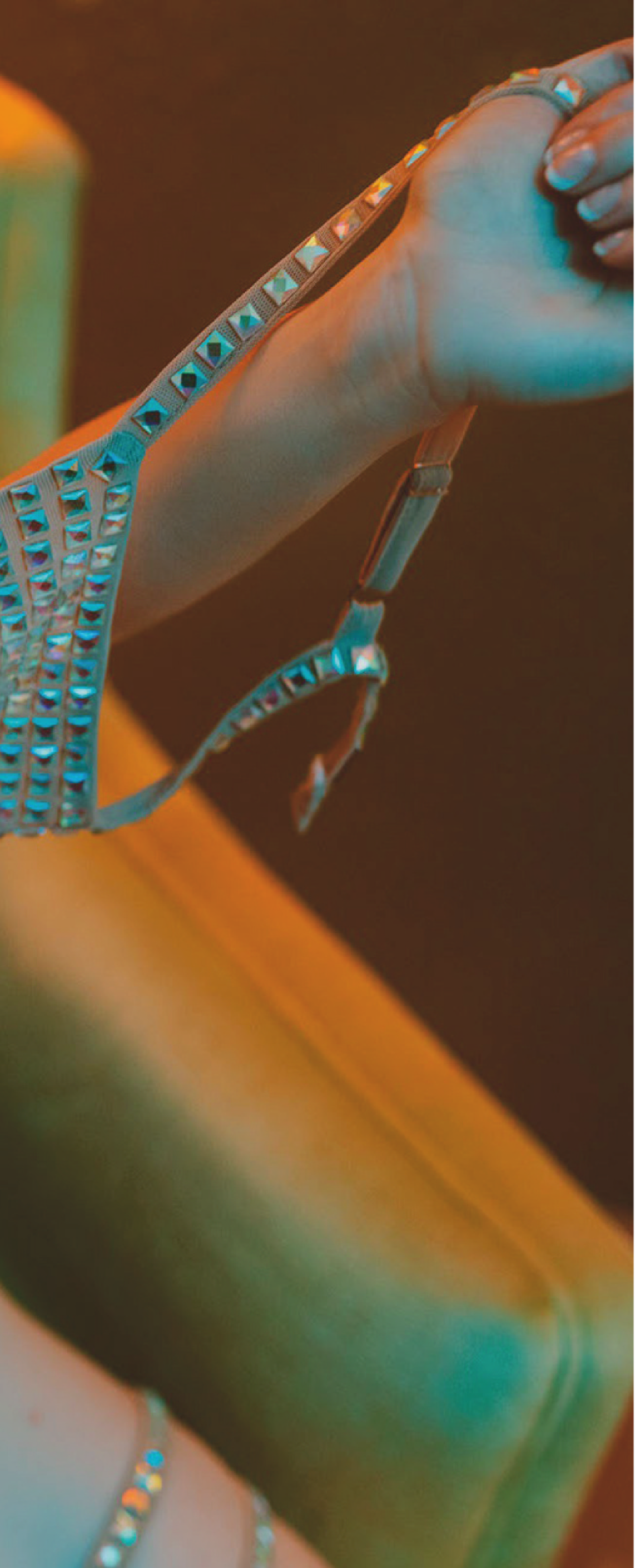
Do you have a favorite shoot?
To me, that's like asking if I have a favorite child. I can't choose.

What do you love most about photographing women?
I have more control over getting the expressions I want from their eyes. Women are more willing to show me their soul through a photo. Over the years, I've found that if I shoot a really nice photo of a woman, they get all excited and take selfie shots off the screen. It makes them feel good and they go next-level to create even better images.

JULY PET OF THE MONTH

NICOLE VAUNT

PHOTOGRAPHY
CORWIN PRESCOTT



NICOLE Vaunt, our July Penthouse Pet of the Month, is a sultry natural beauty. Nicole grew up as a military brat, but she first set down serious roots in the City of Brotherly Love—a place for which she'll "always have a soft spot." The smoldering stunner's adventurous spirit and open mind have led her to pursue anything that has the potential for fun. But Nicole says she's always felt comfortable with nudity and expressing her sexuality, which makes her a perfect fit for this magazine. With an appreciation for the finer things in life, Nicole studied in photography and art history in college—but we think she's a masterpiece all by herself!

Age: 22 years old
Measurements: 34B-25-36
Hometown: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Instagram: @vauntastic
OnlyFans: @vauntastic

On her most remarkable sexual experience…
Lately, I've been combining a sativa strain with my love play, and the combo of mental high and shattering orgasm makes me feel like the universe is flowing up and around me.

On her ideal lover…
I have a thing for blondes—no matter where on the gender spectrum they are.

On her perfect date…
You're cooking for me while I play DJ, laughing and trying to find new music you've never heard. Sharing a joint on the patio afterward, naming the stars before we fall into your soft bed and the evening breeze adds its caresses to ours. Then we go skydiving after breakfast!

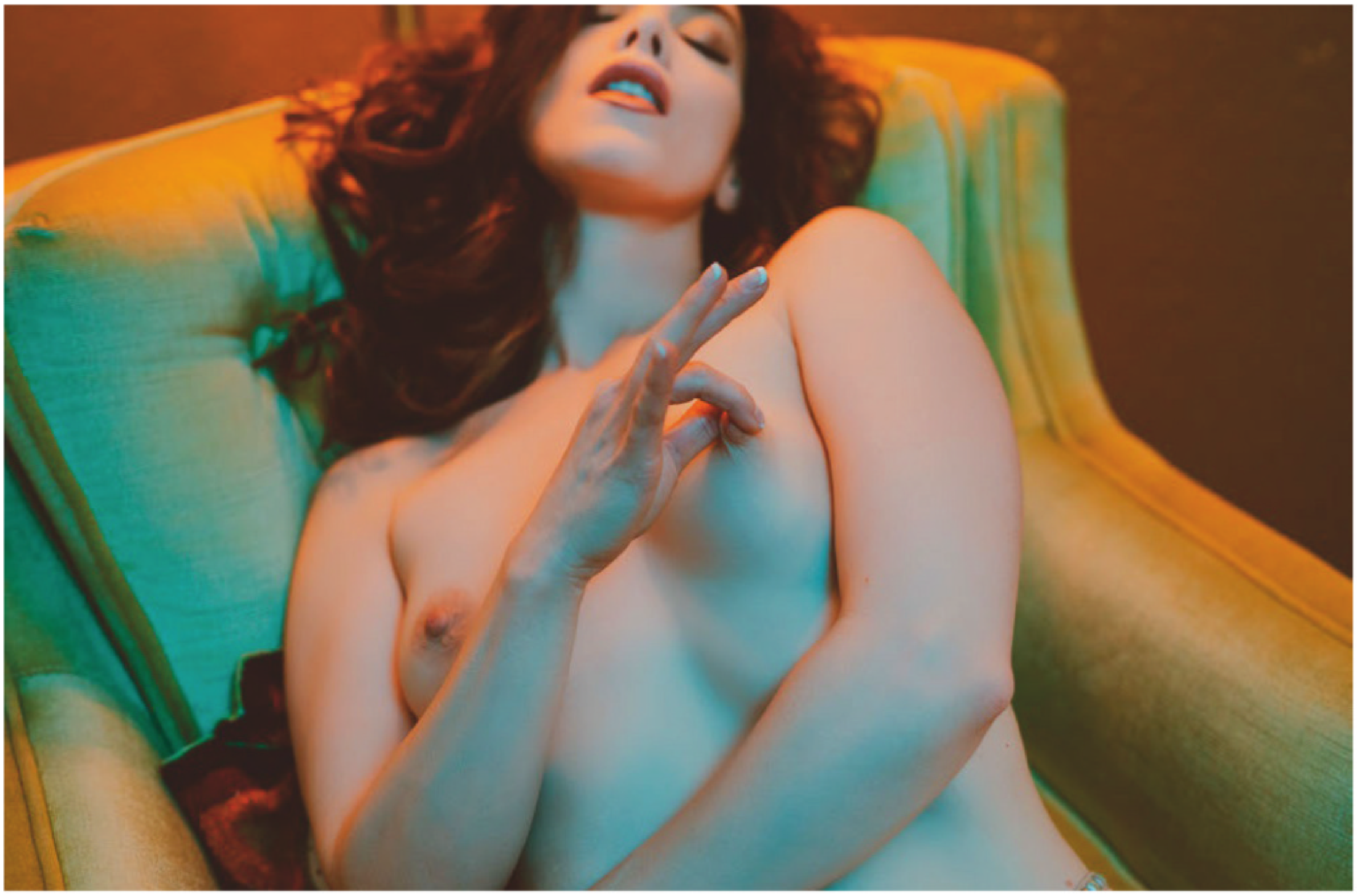
On her biggest turn-on…
Passion. Not necessarily toward me—although I love being desired—but when someone is passionate about something and their eyes light up and they can't wait to tell you about it. That does it for me.

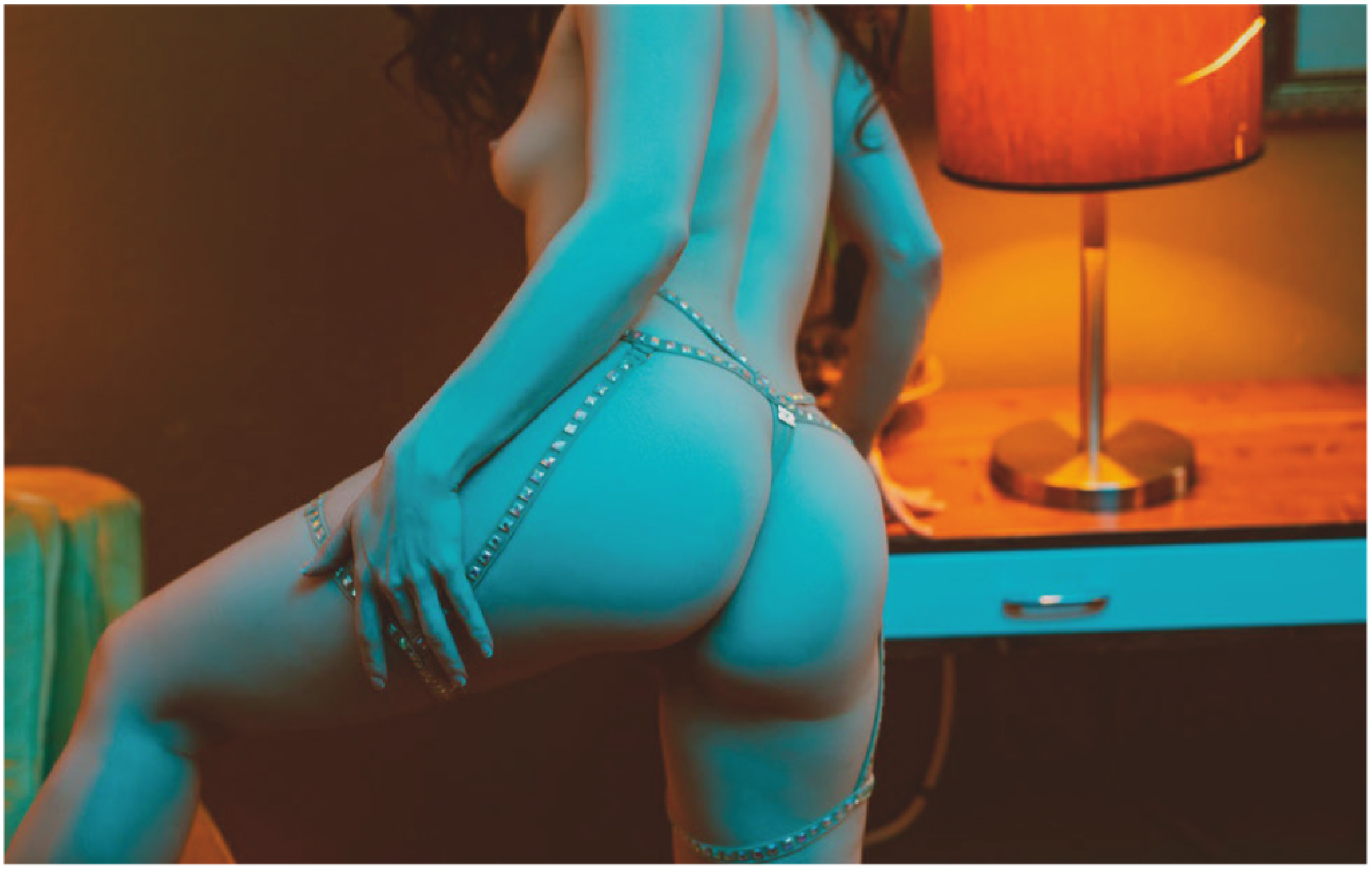
On her favorite fetishes…
I'm a big fan of sensory deprivation—of being blindfolded and not knowing what's coming next.

On when she knows she wants to have sex with a new love…
There's no better indicator of sexual prowess than how someone kisses you. Intelligence and strength will pull me in, but your lips are what will open my legs.

On what she considers kinky…
Marks on my ass and the promise of more to come.

On her favorite celebrities…
I like to see a good soul combined with talent. Celebrities like Steve Carell and Tessa Thompson, who use their power and platform to effect change, are my favorites.





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WHERE ARE THEY NOW

ALEXIS LOVE

PHOTOGRAPHY
RYAN CALDERON

TWELVE years after becoming our May 2008 Penthouse Pet of the Month, this firecracker is hotter than ever! Alexis says she “spent a few rewarding years feature dancing,” and then became an aesthetician. But she still loves reconnecting with old fans and making new ones at her OnlyFans account, @teamalexislove.

CALIGULA REVEALED

MARIO TURSI'S ON-SET PHOTOGRAPHS TAKE US INSIDE THE FILMING OF A LEGENDARY MOVIE.

BY THOMAS NEGOVAN

Bob Guccio
THE PENTHOUSE PHO
CENTURY GUILD and PENTHOU

EVENT PHOTOS: TOMMY O

THE Los Angeles Art Show is one of the world's leading fine art events. This year's show, held in early February, featured contemporary work exhibited by more than 120 galleries from 23 countries.

Penthouse was part of the action, helping celebrate the 40th anniversary of the legendary feature film *Caligula* with never-before-seen photographs shot on set and behind the scenes by one of cinema's greatest film documentarians, Italian photographer Mario Tursi.

When Penthouse founder Bob Guccione was producing *Caligula,* he spared no expense in hiring top creative talents to write, direct, shoot, costume, and set-design this epic, sexually daring film. And when it came to documenting the production itself, he turned to a master photographer.

Mario Tursi was born in Rome in 1929. Following an apprenticeship as a street photographer, he took a job as an official photographer for the Vatican while still a teenager. At 19, he was hired as a photojournalist for Italy's most prominent agency, VEDO. Rising to the top of VEDO by age 27, Tursi eventually turned to pursuing his deepest passion: film-set photography.

Tursi became the production photographer of choice for numerous celebrated directors of the sixties, seventies, and eighties. Roman

CENTURY GUILD AND PENTHOUSE
CALIGULA
THE MARIO TURSI PHOTOGRAPHS
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CENTURY GUILD
EST. 1999
CALIGVLA

Polanski, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Lina Wertmüller, and Luchino Visconti all hired this artist with a camera to document their movie shoots.

In 1989, Tursi won the Grand Prize for Cinematic Photography at the Cannes Film Festival for documenting the filming of Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

Before retiring in 2002, six years prior to his death, Tursi documented more than 40 films, raising his camera a final time as an on-set photographer during Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*.

While documenting the *Caligula* production in Rome in the late seventies, Tursi shot a remarkable 10,000-plus photographs. He grabbed shots of A-list actors rehearsing and cavorting, the swift building of ambitious, expensive sets, producers worrying over fine details as filming approached, a sea of extras being costumed, and Penthouse Pets being filmed.

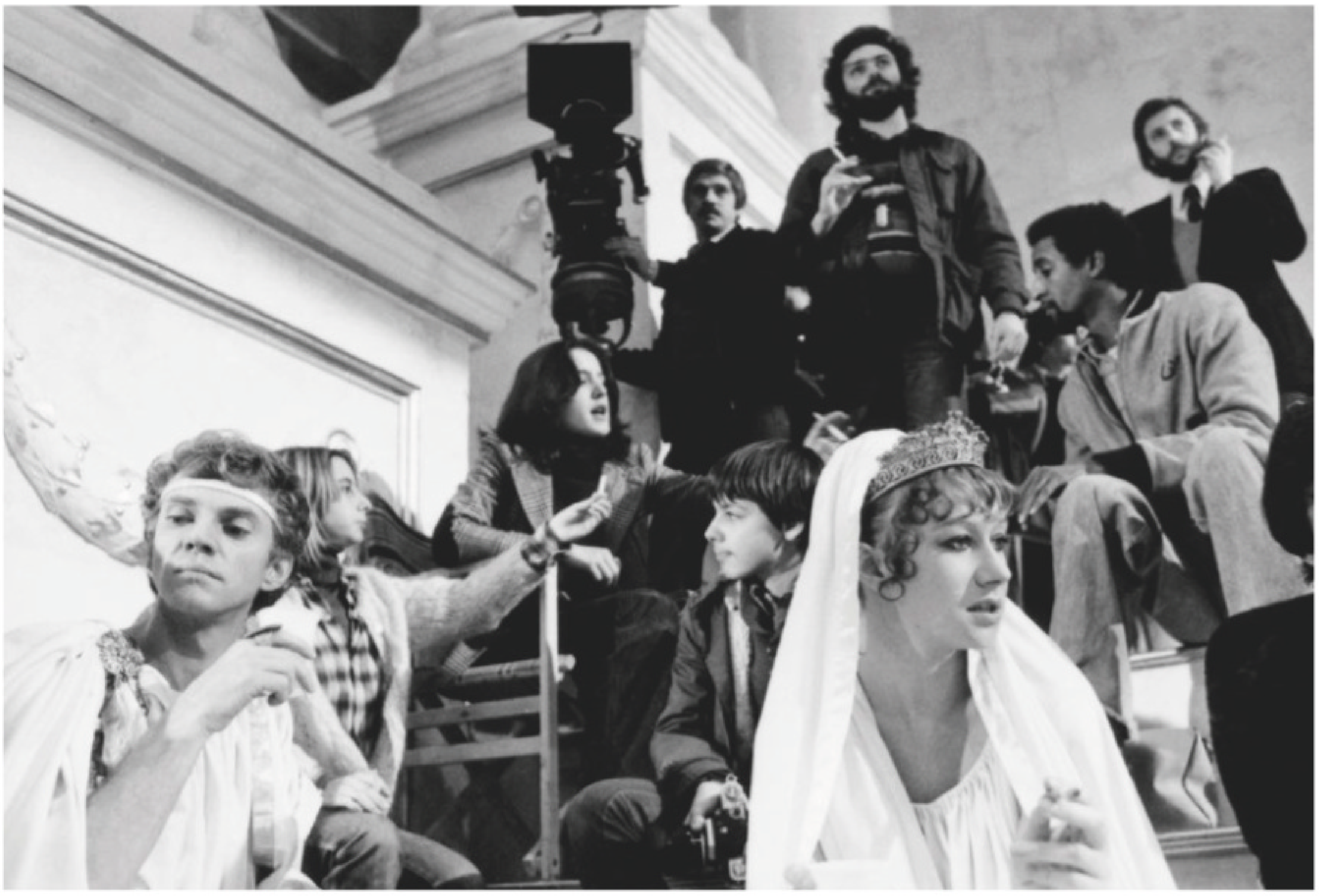
Tursi's extraordinary images help us imagine what it must have been like to participate in the madness and magic of a film that remains one of the most controversial of all time.

Thomas Negovan is an L.A.-based author and archivist tasked with the new edit of "Caligula" and preserving the trove of recently discovered raw footage. Learn more about the 40th anniversary release of "Caligula" at caligulammxx.com.

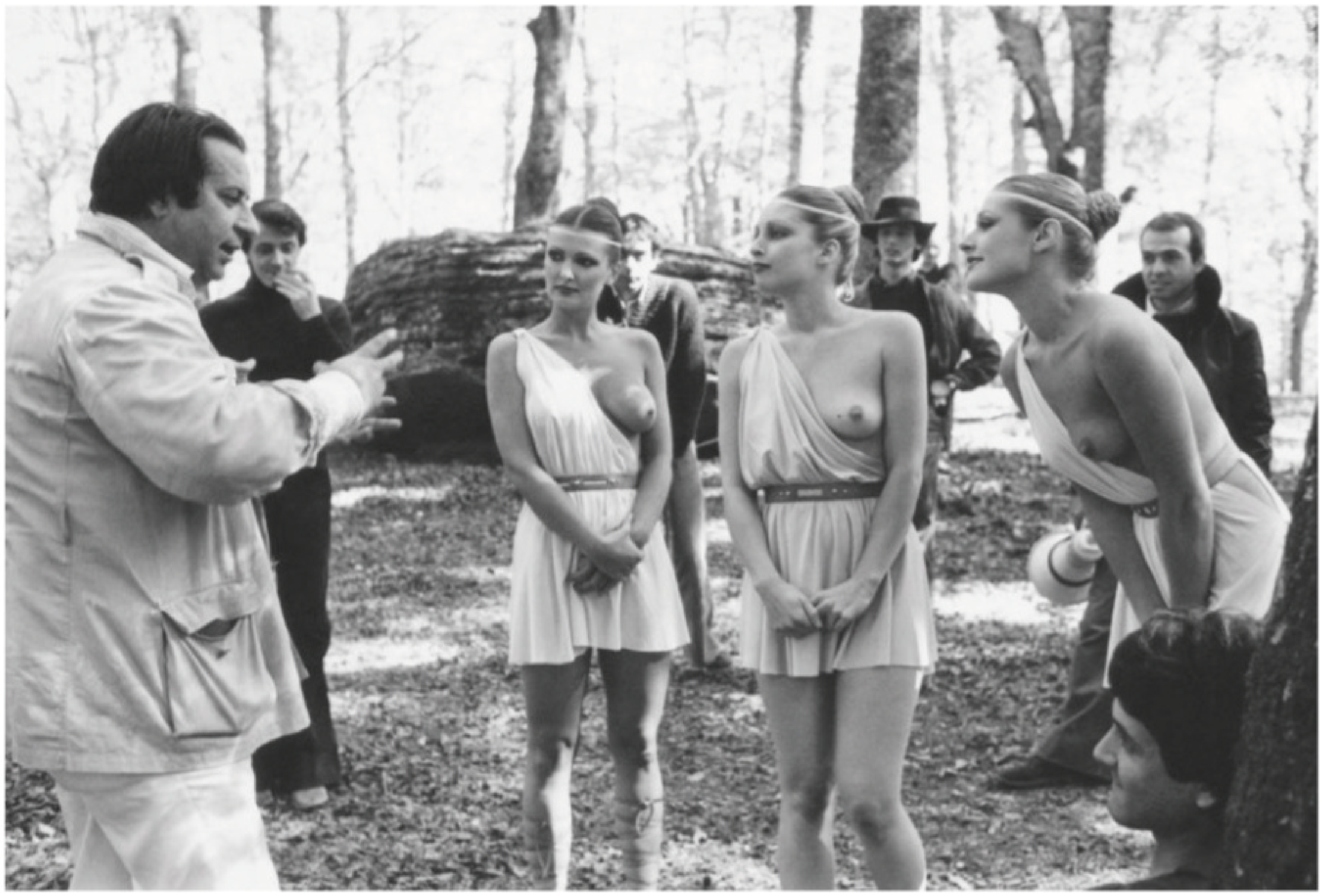
CALIGULA
THE MARIO TURSI PHOTOGRAPHS

Penthouse Pets (left to right) Addie Andrews, Lacy Lennon, and Charlotte Stokely pay homage to Mario Tursi at the L.A. Art Show

Malcolm McDowell and Helen Mirren as Caligula and his wife Caesonia; Opposite page: Helen Mirren



Tinto Brass directs "Caligula" extras



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McDowell in Emperor Caligula's death scene

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QUINN WILDE

PHOTOGRAPHY
MS. SANDS

QUINN Wilde, our August Penthouse Pet of the Month, is a curvy bombshell who loves cosplay, videogames, and all things anime. But this cool Colorado native is also a total brainiac who's currently working toward her master's degree. Quinn says she occasionally modeled "as a hobby" before dipping her toes (and then some) into webcamming and adult videos. Now we're thrilled to have this petite powerhouse gracing our pages with her beguiling gaze and stunning good looks.

Age: 24 years old
Measurements: 32D-25-32
Hometown: Denver, Colorado
Instagram: @wildegirlox
OnlyFans: @quinnwildexxx

On her biggest turn-ons…
I like dirty talk and neck kisses. I also like when people are open-minded and not cocky. The sexiest quality a person can have is confidence.

On her dream job…
If I could have any job in the world, I'd get paid to watch anime and never leave my house.

On her favorite food and drink…
My favorite food is ramen, and my favorite drink is boba tea.

On her perfect guy…
My ideal man is a nerd like me, who enjoys the same things I do. Someone who isn't a social butterfly and doesn't mind staying home and getting takeout.

On her concept of kinky…
Kinky, to me, would be doing something out of the ordinary in bed. I don't have anal sex that often, but every once in a while I'll give it a shot.

On her best qualities…
I'm an honest person with good intentions.

On her favorite tunes…
My musical tastes are always changing. It just depends on my mood.

On her most exciting sexual experience…
It was in a public place, and we were trying not to get caught!

On when she's happiest…
When I'm surrounded by people I love, and when I'm being a nerd in my room.

On her celebrity crush…
If I could have sex with anyone, it would be Keanu Reeves. He's a nice guy and super good-looking.

LUST IN TRANSLATION

EROTIC FICTION BY JENNY NORDBAK

I HAD been working in Italy for two weeks and was due to head back to the States as soon as we wrapped up negotiations. I'd been so consumed by work I'd barely set foot in beautiful Rome, so I decided that Saturday night, no matter how tired I was, I was going out to sample one of the nearby restaurants.

I had an extravagant meal with two glasses of Chianti, and by the time I was contemplating dessert, a line of clubgoers was forming along the wall across the courtyard. I smiled fondly, remembering my own party days from college.

As I was about to turn back to the menu, I caught sight of the hottest woman I'd ever laid eyes on.

In a pair of leather pants so tight they might as well have been painted on, and a sequined halter top that made it clear she wasn't wearing a bra, the dark-haired stunner made her way quickly past the line and greeted the bouncer familiarly, kissing him on both cheeks. When a number of men in line catcalled her, she turned to snap something at them playfully and caught my eye.

By the third song, we were kissing and thrusting against each other, writhing in the sweaty mass of people.

For just a second, her dark eyes bored into mine and sent a lightning bolt straight to my dick. But before I could get my fill, she'd disappeared into the shadowy doorway.

I'd had just enough wine to think I was 22 again, so once I'd finished dessert, I walked straight over to the bouncer and into the darkness of the club.

I'd barely made it three steps into the massive main room before I spotted the woman I'd been ogling outside. In a cage that was elevated above the dance floor, she gyrated and twisted to the sensuous beat of the music. I couldn't stop staring, but I wasn't the only one. I instantly felt like a creep, so I made my way to the bar.

I had to work to catch a bartender's attention. Once I had my drink in hand, I let myself glance back at the cage only to find it empty. The woman had vanished into the crowded club.

Suddenly, someone crashed into me from behind, making me spill my drink. I turned to see what'd happened and found the very woman I'd been searching for getting cornered by a couple of drunk guys.

Without thinking about it, I took her by the shoulders and put her between the bar and me. The guys looked like they wanted to say something, but I shrugged and said, "She's with me." I didn't know if they spoke English or not, but they took my meaning and left.

I tried to step back and give the woman some room, but it was so crowded there was nowhere to go. She turned in my arms, body brushing against mine, and said, *"Grazie."*

I nodded. "I'm Logan."

"Gabriella." She pointed to herself and said something else, but all I could do was shake my head and tell her I didn't speak Italian.

She nodded significantly to my now empty drink. *"Mi dispiace."*

I shrugged it off and ordered another. When I nodded to her in invitation, she rattled something off to the bartender who reappeared with two cocktails in hand. We clinked our glasses together and smiled at how universally understood that gesture was.

We drank without talking, only smiling when we met each other's eyes, but she eventually leaned in to say something into my ear. I had no fucking clue what it was, but if she could do that to an "r" with her tongue, what the hell else could she do with it?

I smiled sheepishly and held my hands up to show Gabriella I didn't understand, so she took my drink and set it down on the bar, pointing out to the dance floor. I followed her through the crowd, groaning when she stopped and pulled my hips against her luscious ass. It should've been illegal to move like that in those pants.

From the glances she was throwing over her shoulder, she knew exactly what she was doing to me and liked that it was making me hard. She slid a hand between us and gripped my dick through my pants, grinding her body up and down against mine.

By the third song, we were kissing and thrusting against each other, writhing in the sweaty mass of people. I inched my fingertips into the waistband of her pants and she pressed harder against me, grabbing my forearm to encourage me to go lower.

I'd rationally known there couldn't possibly be anything under those pants, but knowing it and actually feeling it as my fingers

brushed the slick heat of her bare pussy were two different things.

I could barely get the first knuckle of two fingers inside her, but she melted against me as I tried to work them deeper. I slid my other hand across her rib cage and under her halter top, cupping her full breast and rolling a taut nipple between my fingertips. I was about to come in my pants like a schoolboy.

Gabriella kissed me hard and yelled something into my ear over the music. I'd never wanted to speak another language so bad in my life.

I looked at her helplessly and shook my head. Was she telling me to stop? That she had to go? That she knew of a dark corner we could fuck in?

She tried again, but I still had no idea what she was saying. A smirk tugged at her lips as she grabbed my cock, gestured between us, and pointed in the direction of a side door. Message received loud and clear.

I followed her through two doors into the shocking quiet of some kind of storeroom. My ears were still humming from the noise in the club, but it didn't matter since we couldn't understand each other anyway.

She grabbed my crotch and backed me into the wall, seizing complete control.

When she undid my pants and pulled out my dick, she murmured something in her husky voice. She took it in her mouth and I groaned, watching as her eyes lit up. She sucked me deep and hard, sliding her hand in rhythm with her mouth.

I eventually pulled away, and I knew she was protesting even though I couldn't understand what she was saying. But I needed to fumble through my wallet for the emergency condom.

When I pulled it out, her eyes lit up again and she uttered a string of sexy-sounding Italian words, peeling her pants off.

I held it up and asked, "Is this okay?"

Gabriella snatched the condom from me, pushed me across the room to a table, and put it on me herself.

I lay back on the table and she climbed on top, straddling me unselfconsciously with her soaking wet pussy. She sank down onto my cock with one deep thrust of her hips. It felt so good I didn't think I'd be able to understand her even if she had been speaking English.

She rode me hard, and when I reached up to stroke her clit at the same time, she pushed my hand away, intent on finishing herself off on my cock instead.

Moments later, Gabriella kissed me as she came, uttering breathless Italian words against my mouth. The feel of her tight pussy squeezing and the animalistic sounds she made pushed me over the edge, too. I came so violently my vision blurred, and I could only lie there and pant with her draped across my chest doing the same.

I'd somehow fucked the most gorgeous woman in Italy without being able to speak a word of her language. The attraction between us had been something deep and primitive. Words would only have gotten in the way.

Jenny Nordbak is a retired dominatrix and author of "The Scarlett Letters: My Secret Year of Men in an L.A. Dungeon."

PHOTO: MIAMI BEACH FOREVER / SHUTTERSTOCK

PHOTOS: LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS / SHUTTERSTOCK

PINK NEON

I HAD really wanted to travel overseas, but my post-divorce bank account kept me looking stateside. I decided I could afford, barely, a luxury hotel in Florida known for its spa.

But...Florida? After the messy end of my marriage and a long, crappy winter, I could live with the Sunshine State. I tossed my bags into the back of my car and headed south, cranking my favorite music.

When I got to Georgia, I rolled the windows down and kept the music blasting. Every time I stopped for food or gas, my hair looked a little wilder and my heart felt a bit bolder. By the time I pulled up to my Miami hotel, I'd made another decision: I was going to get laid. I'd kick off my new single life with a bang. Literally.

I must have been sending out vibes, because things came together fast on this front. Justin was my bellhop. He was dark-haired, with blue eyes, and in his mid-twenties, I guessed. His tan forearms looked muscular in his hotel polo shirt. He hefted my heavy suitcase like it was a purse. I took a peek at his ass in his regulation khakis and liked what I saw.

Up in my balconied room, as I bent over in snug jeans to set my handbag on the bed, I held still for a couple seconds, letting him look at my ass. At least I hoped he was looking at my ass.

The move I made sent out an unmistakable signal, and I would have felt foolish if he wasn't paying attention. But when I straightened up and turned to him, his blue eyes sparkled. He held my gaze, the hint of a smile on his face, and my instincts told me he was interested. So I went for it.

"This might be a little forward," I said, "but do you ever...fraternize with guests?"

Again, Justin held my gaze. "Are you interested?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered.

I had condoms in my handbag—I came prepared—and I set two on the mattress near the pillows. Seconds later we toppled onto the bed, wrapped in each other's arms.

Justin's shift break was about to start, so our timing was perfect.

I shed my shoes and yanked off my jeans. I was going commando, and Justin made a gruff, lusty sound when he saw my bare pussy. Moments later, he went down on me, lapping, licking, sucking, nibbling. I pushed my hands into his thick hair, thrusting my pussy against his tongue.

The circling pressure on my clit sent throbs of pleasure through my body. The rawness of this encounter, giving in to animal passion, sent my excitement into overdrive.

I hadn't been with a man for months and, God, it felt good to have his mouth on my pussy, his strong hands gripping my thighs. This was just the kind of scenario I'd been dreaming about in the car.

Next, Justin slipped two fingers deep inside my soaking cunt and reached up with his other hand, playing with a nipple. Seconds later, a delicious charge arrived, waves of it overtaking my body. My back arched and I came with a moan.

When I drifted back down to earth, I shifted my attention to Justin. Once he was naked, I took a moment to admire his ridged abs, strong shoulders, and long, thick cock.

Grabbing a condom, he had it unwrapped and on his dick in seconds. Then he flipped me onto my belly like I weighed nothing.

Seizing my hips, Justin drove his cock into me. I met him thrust for thrust with my ass and hips. A moan escaped my mouth. It seemed to encourage him, and he fucked me harder, pumping his dick into my pussy until he had me ready to come again.

I could tell from his hoarse breathing that he was getting close to orgasm himself. He used his fit body to powerfully thrust into me. Suddenly the world spun and I came, a shudder rippling through my body. Justin came seconds later, releasing a brief, guttural moan.

"That was—wow," I said moments later, with Justin collapsed beside me. After his breathing relaxed, he braced his body above me, his face close to mine.

Slipping a hand beneath my short dress, Selena ran her fingers across my pussy.

"I better head downstairs," he said. "But I have an idea. Do you want to meet us tonight? For more fun?"

"Us?"

"Me and my girl. She'll love you. You'll love her."

I thought about it for one or two seconds.

"I'm in," I said. "Where should I meet you?"

"Nicco's would work. Great place. We live nearby—it's only about a mile from here. We can have a couple drinks, and then see what happens after that."

That night I met Justin and his lady. Selena had long, dark hair and eyes like shiny obsidian. Her body was both slender and curvy, utterly sexy, and she didn't walk so much as glide. She was unbelievably hot.

Halfway through our second drink, Selena touched my thigh. I gave her an encouraging smile, looking into her eyes. She leaned in close. The bar music was loud—loud enough that we raised our voices to talk. But what happened next didn't require words.

Slipping a hand beneath my short dress, Selena ran her fingers across my pussy. A warm tingle traveled through my body. Immediately, I started getting wet.

Selena then pushed the crotch of my panties to the side. I shifted in my seat, feeling the heavy bass of the music throb in my cunt.

On the other side of me in the booth, Justin leaned in and softly kissed my neck. He kept kissing me there as Selena worked one finger, then two, inside me, expertly maneuvering them until my pussy was totally wet.

Selena's fingers slid deeper. Justin's lips brushed the skin of my neck.

"Mmmm," I purred, totally aroused.

"Why don't we go?" Justin said. "We're only a block away."

I nodded, downed the rest of my drink, and stood on weak legs.

We headed to the couple's small, cute apartment on the second floor of a peach-colored Art Deco building. The room we entered first was faintly lit by the pink neon sign of a club across the street.

Leaving the lights off, Selena pressed me against a wall and kissed me, her tongue tasting of fruit and alcohol. I felt a melting sensation, and my pussy pulsed.

Justin moved between me and Selena and pulled down my panties. He stroked the skin of my thighs, moved his hand to my pussy, and then got down on his knees, raised my dress, and put his tongue to my wetness.

I swooned.

Justin licked my cunt before moving a thick finger inside it. Meanwhile, Selena peeled the top of my dress down and began licking one of my erect nipples. She sucked on it, swirling her tongue across the flesh, and then gave it a nip, sending a jolt of pleasure to my pussy.

Meanwhile, Justin's tongue worked my clit. He used different techniques, licking and circling, but only when he started sucking, drawing my clit into his mouth, did I lose it.

Crying out against Selena's lips, I had another head-spinning orgasm. Selena nearly had to hold me up as I trembled through it. When my moaning ended, they led me to the bedroom.

Still drunk with pleasure, I stood there light-headed as they stripped me, the glow from the club sending a dim, erotic light into the uncurtained room.

Justin pointed to the bed. "Make yourself comfortable."

Naked, I walked through the room's soft glow and lay down on their bed.

Justin and his gorgeous girlfriend took off their clothes. Their bodies were mesmerizing in the sexy light. Selena had full, round breasts, a taut stomach between curved hips, and a shaven slit of a pussy at the arch where her long, slender legs met.

I thought of Justin's big cock sliding into that inviting place.

Justin went to a bedside drawer, took out a condom, and put it on. Then he settled his muscular frame above me before pushing my legs into the air with his strong hands. Gliding his long, hard dick along the wetness of my cunt, he slid inside me and began to thrust.

I tilted my head back, loving the way his hardness filled me up.

Standing in the soft pink light, Selena, looking like a Miami goddess, came to me. After smiling at my blissed-out face, she pushed a finger into my mouth. Completely in her thrall, I sucked on it.

Selena lowered her pussy to my face. I could smell her, salty and sweet, like the ocean in summer. I lapped at her cunt, trailing my tongue along her tender flesh.

When I found her clit, small and firm, I moved my tongue across it. I applied the kind of pressure that worked best for my own clit, and within seconds Selena's hips started to rock. Her pussy grew wetter and wetter. I pushed my tongue deep inside her.

Meanwhile, Justin held my thighs with his firm hands, driving into me with a forceful rhythm. My cunt grew tighter around his cock. I reached up, pushed a finger inside Selena's pussy, and felt the draw of her internal walls. I pushed another finger in and started working them the way I did when I was masturbating.

Justin started to rock from side to side, grinding his body against my clit. All of a sudden, Selena came, moaning, her pussy rippling around my fingers, her juices coating my face. I came myself a moment later, bucking beneath Justin as he pounded into me.

Then Justin growled, ecstatically, his body going rigid as he had his own orgasm seconds after me.

Moments later, he dropped limp to the bed. All three of us lay there, savoring that wonderful contentment that follows the thrill of good sex.

When it was time for me to leave, Selena said, "How long are you here?"

"All week."

She grinned. "More time to get to know each other."

"I like the sound of that," I replied.

—Jennifer B., Cincinnati, Ohio

AIR BUDS

WHEN Jake booked our flight to Paris, I was excited to see the first-class seating. Each fully reclining chair sat tucked inside its own private cubicle, he'd told me. It would be my first time flying in such luxe surroundings, and I couldn't wait.

Leading up to our trip, Jake started to tease me, insisting that he was going to sneak into my little nook so we could join the Mile-High Club over the Atlantic. I honestly thought he was joking, and I played along.

Finally, the night of our departure arrived. Security and boarding went smoothly, then I had fun settling myself into my own cozy, flying suite. →

PHOTO: ZENSTOCK; MUNIMARA / SHUTTERSTOCK

About an hour into the flight, after the lights were dimmed so passengers could sleep the five or so hours till breakfast, Jake rose from his seat and snuck across the aisle.

Nervous that someone would see us, I quickly pulled him down and tugged the big, fluffy blanket over us both.

“Good thinking,” Jake muttered against my neck. The grainy stubble on his chin scraped against the delicate skin just beneath my earlobe.

I writhed beneath him, rubbing my thighs together to try to quell the pulse in my pussy.

“Oh, allow me,” Jake insisted.

His thick, brawny fingers traced the line where my thighs met, tickling the sensitive skin through my spandex leggings. When he reached the seam that bisected my crotch, he followed it up until he hit my clit.

Though I tried to keep quiet, I couldn’t help but gasp. Clearly, Jake didn’t need to be able to see my body to know exactly where I wanted to be touched.

I pinched my bottom lip between my teeth, desperate to contain the mewls of pleasure I was making as Jake’s thumb circled my clit.

His hand moved a little higher, and his fingers curled into the waistband of my leggings.

“Let’s get these out of the way,” he said huskily.

He rolled my pants and underwear down my legs, pausing only to free my feet from the fabric. Then he nestled his head between my thighs.

“That’s what I like to see,” he murmured as he trailed a finger along my freshly trimmed landing strip.

He nuzzled his nose against my pussy. “You smell so sweet,” he whispered. “Just like candy.”

I reached down and pressed a finger to his lips. “Someone will hear you.”

Jake chuckled, puffing warm air onto my bare skin.

“No one will hear me,” he promised. “Trust me, everyone’s wearing earplugs or headphones.”

His hands moved over my slit. Using his fingers, he parted my folds, exposing my pussy to the cool plane air.

But Jake didn’t allow me to remain cold for long. His tongue dipped inside me, tracing a path up one moist pussy lip and down the other. On the first pass, he was careful to skirt my pulsating clit, but the second time around he hit that bundle of nerves head-on.

I bit back another moan.

“Why are you so wet?” Jake asked. “Is it because I keep doing this?”

He sealed his lips around my clit and hummed a little tune, the sound creating a buzz that felt absolutely divine.

At that point, I didn’t care who might catch us. I was so goddamn aroused that I was more likely to ask a passerby to join us than I was to stop Jake from what he was doing.

Deciding to surrender completely, I rested my hands on my boyfriend’s head and rocked my hips against him.

Since Jake still had his lips wrapped around my clit, he released a long, reverential, “Mmmm.”

There was that intoxicating vibration

PHOTO: SOLID PHOTOS / SHUTTERSTOCK

again. The effects were similar to my favorite sex toy, but Jake felt so much better. His mouth was warm, soft, and pleasantly pliant. He molded to the shape of my mound, ensuring that every nook and cranny was tended to.

Having Jake's tongue dance over my clit was maddening enough. But then he had to go and add his fingers to the mix. It only took two to fill me and, fuck, did it feel incredible.

Growing impatient, I thrust my pelvis against Jake's hand, leaving no space to question what I desired.

Always attentive, Jake delivered. He worked his mouth and fingers in tandem to finish me off.

As I came, I pushed the fluffy fleece blanket against my mouth to muffle my groans. But if anyone heard, in that moment I didn't really care.

The second my body stopped shaking, Jake wriggled his way up my torso, bringing us face to face. He brushed his lips over mine. I could taste the tangy flavor of my juices. I loved it when Jake ate me out. Having my unique flavor on his lips afterwards was a bonus—a not-so-subtle reminder that my man had seen to my needs.

Jake's fingers caressed the tender skin at the back of my knee as he hitched one of my legs up over his hip. "Come on, babe, roll with me."

He reached behind my thigh and curled his fingers into the fleshy underside. In one smooth motion, he flipped our bodies so that he was lounging on the recliner and I sat perched on top of him. He'd magically positioned me so that I was straddling his hips, with my knees resting comfortably on either side of him. It was the perfect position to fuck undetected on an airplane.

Jake reached down and took his erection in his fist. He moved it like a joystick, seeking the best angle to thrust deep into my pussy.

The crown of his cock entered my hole, stretching me wide to accommodate his girth. Jake gripped my hips, holding me steady as he pumped his cock.

With him fully inside me, I groaned again. This time, I pushed my face in the flesh between his shoulder and neck, dampening the sound.

Using his hold on my hips to guide me, Jake bounced me up and down on his lap. He tried to keep the motion small and discreet, but our hunger far outweighed our fear of getting caught.

By the time I reached the finish line, Jake was lifting me so high my head could undoubtedly be seen bobbing above the little privacy wall surrounding my seat.

Come surged from Jake's cock into my cunt, warming me from the inside out. He dipped his face down, burying himself between my breasts so they absorbed his groans.

When he was finished, Jake looked up and pinned me with one of his megawatt smiles that I loved so much.

"Great start to the vacation, sweetheart," he said. He rose slowly, careful not to unseat me. Then he laid a soft kiss on my forehead.

As he exited my nook, he whispered, "Sweet dreams. I'll see you in Paris."

–Amy J., Astoria, New York

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BY WILLIAM LEE

Most men dream of hoisting a rucksack onto their back, finding the nearest trailhead, and reappearing weeks later with a full beard and a few near-death experiences, strategically exaggerated for maximum effect. Or maybe you prefer to take your lady out into the wilderness to show her just how well you can provide for her in any circumstance. A carpenter is only as good as his tools, however, so here's a list of products that will help outfit you for a perfect time in the great outdoors—alone, or with someone to keep your sleeping bag warm.

PHOTO: SANCHIK / SHUTTERSTOCK

THERMACELL PATIO SHIELD MOSQUITO REPELLER

Banned substances once kept pesky mosquitoes away, but this handheld device does it without chemical danger. The fuel cartridge creates heat to disperse allethrin, the synthetic form of a natural repellent found in chrysanthemum plants, creating a 15-foot mosquito-free zone around your campsite lasting up to 12 hours. That means you can party naked around the campfire all night long without having to slather yourself in DEET.
rei.com / $25

THERMACELL

KLYMIT STATIC V2 SLEEPING PAD

This inflatable camping pad is ultralight (16.3 ounces) and ultra-small (3″ by 8″ when packed), perfect for when you want to pack light and sleep comfortably. After all, the excitement of snoozing under the stars is quickly dispelled when you try to actually nod off on hard ground. The pad's integrated side rails and V-shaped design will help center and support your body, no matter your sleeping position. It comes with its own stuff sack and repair kit.
amazon.com / $65

DON'T DIE IN THE WOODS TWO-PERSON SURVIVAL TENT

This survival tent is ultralight, compact, and features space-grade Mylar technology that's waterproof and reflects up to 90 percent of your body heat. Available in Army Green, Survival Orange, and Woodland Camo, the tent sets up in five minutes. That means near-instant protection from the elements inside a cocoon of warmth. So if you're hiking and get lost, this tent could mean the difference between freezing in the elements and waking up in the morning to find your way back.
dontdieinthewoods.com / $20

DON'T DIE
IN THE WOODS
2 PERSON
SURVIVAL TENT

ULTIMATE EARS WONDERBOOM 2

What's camping without good music, and what's music without proper speakers? Specifically designed for outdoor use, this powerful wireless Bluetooth speaker boasts a 360-degree sound range and 13 hours of battery life. It also has an "outdoor boost" button to make things louder and clearer. It's waterproof, drop-proof, and floats, so basically it's ready for almost any situation Mother Nature throws your way. **amazon.com / $100**

WOOLRICH LIGHT FLANNEL SHIRT

Founded in 1830, Woolrich is the oldest manufacturer of outerwear in the U.S. (The company supplied blankets to Civil War soldiers and wool clothing for Richard E. Byrd's 1939-40 Antarctic expedition.) This is a flannel with pedigree, and serious style. Wear it in the forest or out on the town, wherever the night takes you. It's lightweight but solid, so you can toss a jacket over it or roll up your sleeves when it's time to cut wood for your campfire. **woolrich.com / $95**

LEATHERMAN WINGMAN MULTITOOL

If you're going to be out in the wilderness, you're gonna want one of these. The Wingman has 14 tools—including a knife, pliers, screwdriver, scissors, wire cutters/stripper, and a bottle/can opener—while still fitting into your pocket. Use as an everyday carry or as a potentially lifesaving implement for when you're out on the trail and need to crack open your beer. And with its 25-year warranty, you're free to use this thing as hard as you want. **amazon.com / $60**

YETI HOPPER M30

You basically shouldn't go anywhere without your Yeti. This insulated soft cooler holds 20 cans of beer and ice, or 28 pounds of ice alone. It's magnetically sealed, plus has a padded strap for carrying. (Just 7 pounds when empty, it won't weigh you down.) Load it up, toss it over your shoulder, and throw it in your truck, boat, or on your back as you charge into the wilderness. When it's break time, you'll have cold beer ready to drink. **yeti.com / $300**

NORTH FACE ONE BAG SLEEPING BAG

North Face's One Bag uses an incredible 3-in-1 system with interchangeable goose-down layers, so you'll be comfortable from -5 to 55 degrees. (For added versatility, the middle layer converts to a shawl, and the bottom layer rolls into a pillow.) So whether you're camping out in summer or waiting out a sub-zero blizzard, the One Bag has your back. And your sides. And your head. You know how a sleeping bag works. **rei.com / $300**

Our readers' exotic sexcapades brought to life...
PENTHOUSE VARIATIONS.COM

FORUM REJECTS

THE BEST OF THE WORST OF PENTHOUSE LETTERS

BLUE BALLS IN VENICE

ILLUSTRATION BY JASON JOHNSON

AFTER a grueling few months at work, I couldn't wait to use my vacation time to go on a trip. I chose Venice, Italy.

Traveling solo, I followed my usual routine: After a day of sightseeing, I parked myself at a popular bar to check out the action and maybe meet a woman or two.

I had just come from watching tourists ogle pigeons at St. Mark's Basilica. I set up at Harry's Bar, famous for its Bellinis, and one of eight million places where Ernest Hemingway had gotten blitzed.

While I was there I happened to smile at two beautiful women. They smiled back. I went over to them. We were travelers, in a glamorous Venetian bar, drinking Bellinis—it wasn't hard to strike up a conversation.

Their names were Ingrid and Astrid. They were Swedish. Ingrid had golden hair, a ski-jump nose, and rosy cheeks. Astrid was a bit taller with long, dark hair and plush lips.

This was their last night in Venice, they said. We joked about the tourists photographing pigeons and piazza storm drains. After a while we decided to hit another bar.

At the next place the drinks had stupid names—Sex on the Water, Ugly American—written in fluorescent marker on a dry-erase board. After a couple rounds, Astrid suddenly blurted out: "In Sweden you are supposed to share and think of society. So you could say Ingrid and I are very Swedish, because we like to share."

I swore a look passed between them. A moment later they stared at me with their sparkling eyes, and I felt a stirring in my groin.

When Ingrid headed off to use the restroom, Astrid held my gaze and said, "Ingrid and I would like you to come to our room. Would you like to come to our room?"

"Uh, yeah," I said, trying to play it cool.

Their pensione was nearby. Once we got inside their room, both women began kissing me and touching me. Their lips tasted of peaches from the Bellinis.

Astrid then directed me to a chair and I sat, hoping for a show.

Ingrid removed Astrid's top. Her round, firm tits were marvelous. My cock stiffened inside my jeans. Ingrid looked over, glanced at my crotch, and smiled. She then used her mouth to worship Astrid's breasts. After a hypnotic minute, she removed Ingrid's skirt and thong, took off her own clothes, knelt, and put her face to her friend's pussy.

Eventually Astrid stood, kissed Ingrid, and guided her down into the bed. She returned her attention to Ingrid's pussy, slipping two fingers inside her.

After giving Ingrid a long, moaning orgasm, Astrid turned to me and said, "We can't leave out our American friend. He's been so polite."

The Swedes got off the bed and came my way with sly, sexy smiles. They freed my hard cock. I'd been worried all the booze might affect my boner, but not with these stunning women.

They took turns kissing me and blowing me. Their hands roamed my body as I cupped their perfect asses.

With Ingrid's mouth on my cock, Astrid said, "Now we would like you to fuck us hard as the other watches. Okay?" Then she asked Ingrid to get some condoms.

Naked Ingrid went to a hiking backpack and began rummaging. Meanwhile Astrid stroked my cock to keep me hard.

Suddenly, Ingrid turned to us, distressed. "I think I left them in Rome. In the drawer beside the bed. I am so sorry!"

I was about to say we could just keep doing what we were doing, but then I remembered Italy's sidewalk condom dispensers. I volunteered to go find some.

I whipped on my clothes, ran downstairs, and headed out. It was almost three in the morning. Everything was closed.

I went down a dark cobblestone alley. I crossed a footbridge over a canal. It was so quiet I could hear water lapping against stone, and my own breathing.

I hustled along, staring through archways and down cross streets, hoping to spot a dispenser. I got lost in three minutes.

Out came the phone. I googled, found a *farmacia* roughly ten blocks away, and started jogging. I turned down a dead-end lane, crossed the wrong footbridge, then backtracked two blocks.

Then finally, there was the drugstore! And next to it a condom dispenser. Amen.

Sweating and parched, I bought two three-packs and stuffed them in my jeans.

For a moment I felt victorious. Then a terrible thought jumped into my head: I'd paid no attention to the pensione's name. Just as I'd paid no attention to what it looked like, or what ancient lane it was on.

Part of me knew right then I was fucked—and wouldn't get fucked. But instead of quitting, I attempted to retrace my steps, which wasn't easy. I spent a full hour stomping around that part of Venice, stopping in at random pensiones, explaining my plight to weary night clerks, to no avail.

Soon, it began to get light. The eastern sky turned pink. I called it quits, falling asleep on a bench in a square, pigeons pecking all around me.

When I woke, I sorely needed water, cappuccino, and food. I went in search of a café.

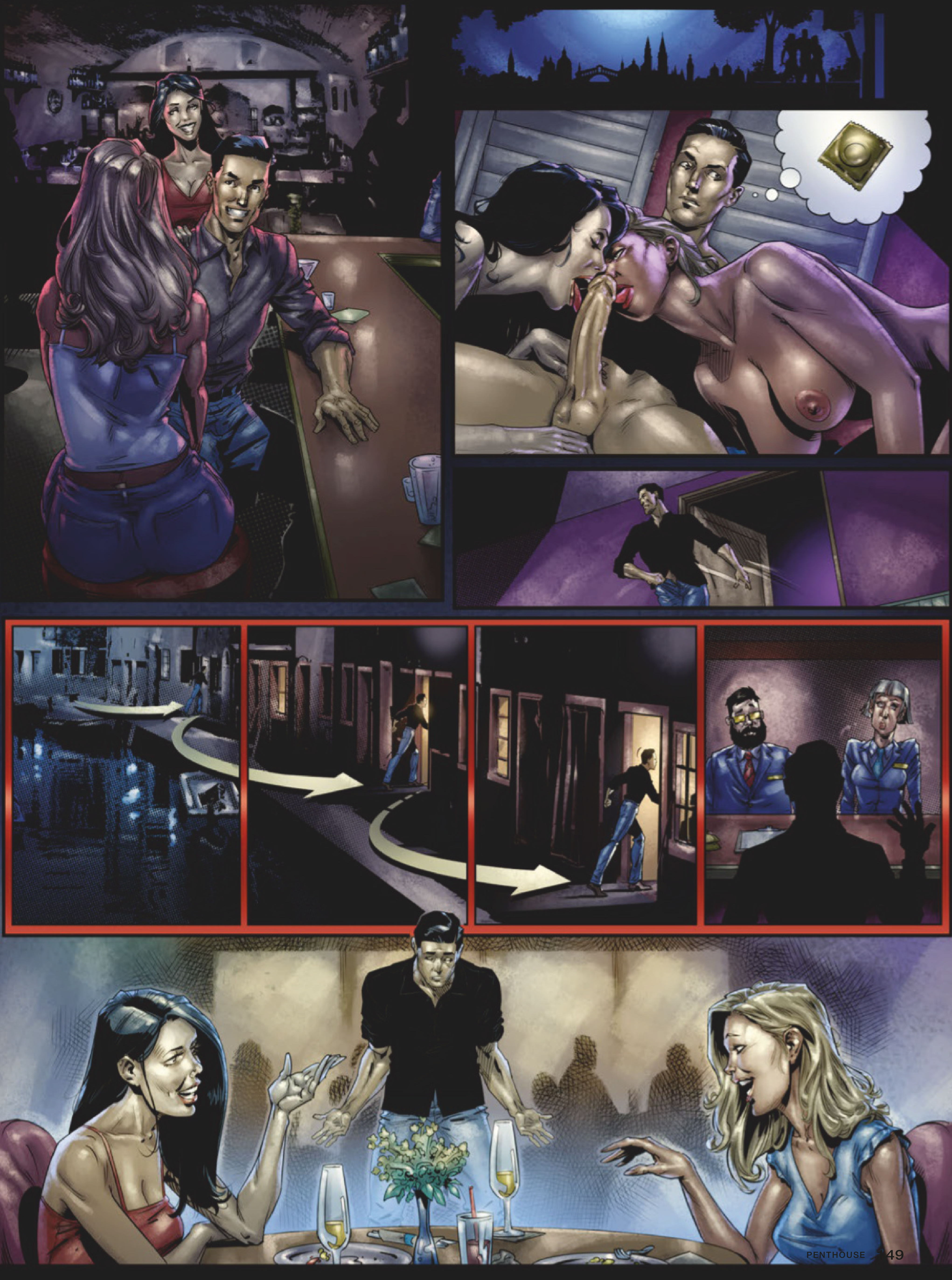
Here is where the knife turned one last time. As I came down a street, I glanced into a restaurant and saw Ingrid and Astrid having a champagne breakfast. Moments later I was standing next to their table, feeling sheepish. I filled them in on my sad adventure.

"Our pensione is two minutes from here!" Ingrid said, shaking her head.

I joined them for what remained of their breakfast. From there, they were catching a train to Verona. We made promises of staying in touch, even reuniting in Venice someday, but nothing ever came of it.

Now I see them only in my dreams.

—Michael S., Philadelphia



EARL MILLER

EARL MILLER IS *PENTHOUSE* MAGAZINE'S MOST PUBLISHED PHOTOGRAPHER. SINCE HIS DEBUT SPREAD IN OUR JUNE 1974 ISSUE, MILLER'S INIMITABLE STYLE OF EROTIC, CUTTING-EDGE NUDES HAS WON HIM ENDLESS FANS AMONG OUR READERS. LIKE THE WORK OF BOB GUCCIONE, MILLER'S PHOTOGRAPHY REPRESENTS SOME OF THE MOST ICONIC, SPECTACULAR ART IN THE HISTORY OF MEN'S MAGAZINES.

Miller remembers his 1988 shoot with Penthouse Pet Micky Honsa:

"In the spring of 1988, Bob Guccione sent me to shoot a number of models for *Penthouse* Germany. The publisher's brother, Max Fry, was one of the richest men in Switzerland at the time, and he owned several incredible properties, including a twelfth-century castle in Italy, which is where I stayed for the five weeks of shooting. The castle was perched on top of the tallest hill in Loano, a small village on the Italian Riviera.

"Casting took place at the *Penthouse* headquarters in Munich, and I ended up picking five of the most gorgeous models and we spent a few days in Germany shopping for wardrobe with the magazine's stylist, Uschi Borsche. Then I was off to Italy with my crew.

"One of the five models was Micky Honsa, who was by far the most beautiful Austrian woman I had ever worked with. I knew that Bob had visions of her being in the American *Penthouse,* not just the German issue, so I paid extra care to her spread. We were shooting in the castle and on its grounds. She was the perfect model. It was the perfect environment.

"Micky was born and raised in Vienna, and was a successful mainstream model. She didn't face the stigma that models in the U.S. suffered if they dared to pose nude in a men's magazine. The Europeans welcomed nudity as a natural form of expression. In fact, Honsa's husband was a successful Austrian businessman who didn't blink an eye about the shoot. It was an unforgettable assignment.

"In the evenings, there wasn't a lot to do in the obscure village of Loano, so after our nightly gourmet meal, which was usually accompanied by a lot of fine liquor and wine, we would gravitate toward the billiard room.

"Fry owned Benito Mussolini's pool table, which was a magnificent rosewood piece that had carved cherubs on the legs. Italian pool tables are not like American models. They are bigger, but with smaller pockets, though you play with the same size balls.

"I'm not sure why, but I dominated the game. It became a bit of a running joke with the crew that this little Jewish boy from Boston was kicking ass at Italian pool. The irony was delicious! No one could beat me, and the Germans got more and more pissed off every night we played.

"One evening, after a 12-hour day on set, Fry's son invited his friend over who had grown up in the village poolhall. He was a young, heavyset guy named Tumba and he was there to teach my American ass a lesson.

"Everyone gathered around to watch our match. It was brutal, but after he missed a few critical shots, I got hot and beat him. Everyone was stunned. No one said a word until Tumba smacked his head and screamed out, *'Impossibili!'*

"The next night, I gave him a rematch, and he beat me, which forced us into a third, 'rubber' game the following night. Another slow, torturous game for the spectators, but I won. The Jewish boy from Boston beat the Axis Powers on Il Duce's table."

See more at earlmiller.com

PARTING SHOT

JEANETTE STARION

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